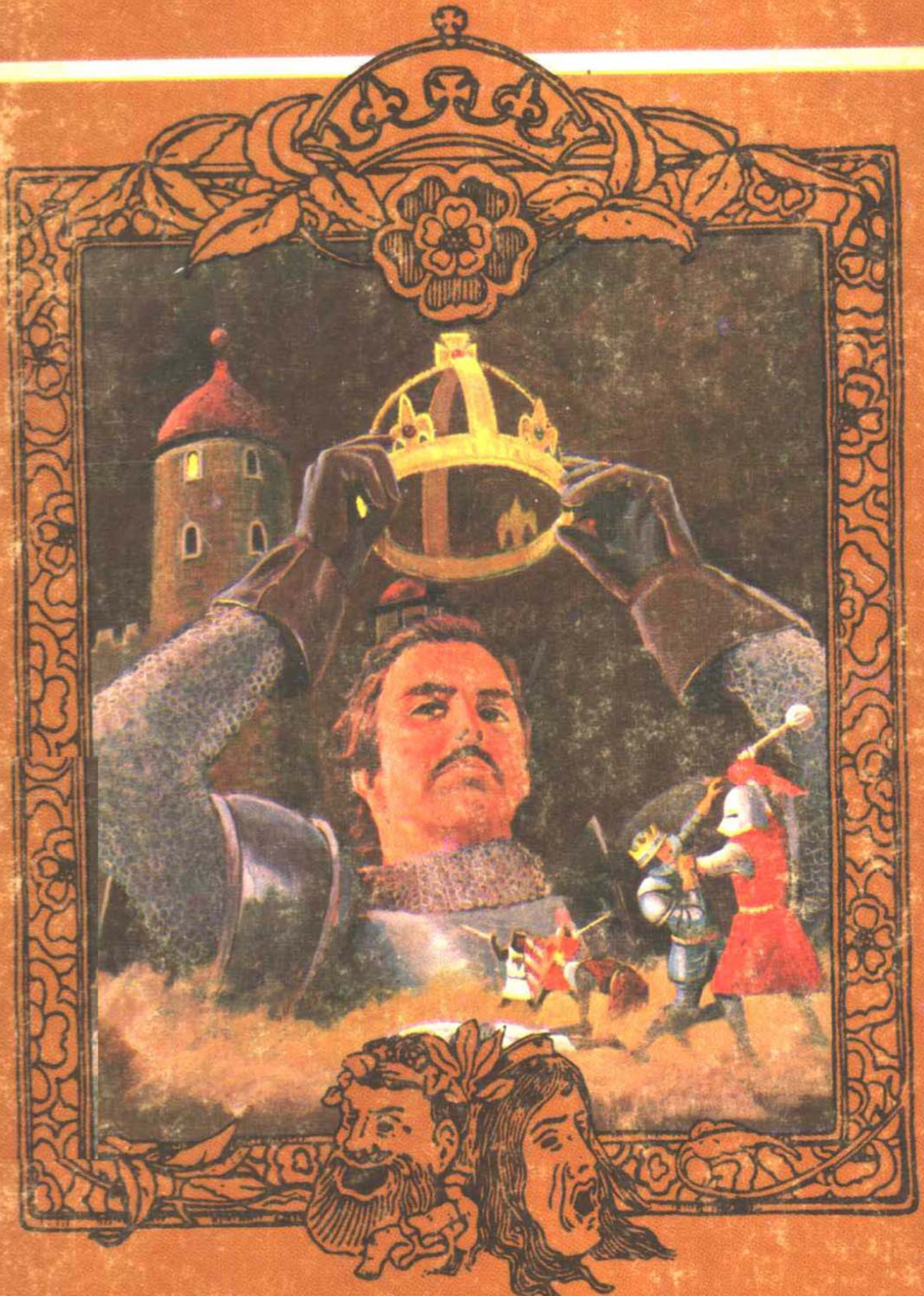
William Shakespeare

RICHARD THE THIRD



William Shakespeare

TO THE READER

THIS FIGURE, THAT THOU HERE SEEST PUT,
IT WAS FOR GENTLE SHAKESPEARE CUT;
WHEREIN THE GRAVER HAD A STRIFE
WITH NATURE, TO OUT-DO THE LIFE:
O, COULD HE BUT HAVE DRAWN HIS WIT
AS WELL IN BRASS, AS HE HATH HIT
HIS FACE; THE PRINT WOULD THEN SURPASS
ALL, THAT WAS EVER WRIT IN BRASS.
BUT, SINCE HE CANNOT, READER, LOOK,
NOT ON HIS PICTURE, BUT HIS BOOK.

BEN: JONSON.

The Mediaeval view of man was generally not an exalted one. It saw him as more or less depraved, fallen from Grace as a result of Adam's sin; and the things of this world as of little value in terms of his salvation. Natural life was thought of mainly as a preparation for man's entry into Eternity. But Renaissance thought soon began to rehabilitate man and nature. Without denying man's need for Grace, men came gradually to accept the idea that there were "goods," values, "innocent delights" to be had in the world here and now. Man himself was seen no longer as wholly vile and depraved, incapable even of desiring goodness, but rather as Shakespeare saw him in *Hamlet*:

> *"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason!*
> *how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how*
> *express and admirable! in action how like an angel!*
> *in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world!*
> *the paragon of animals!"*

It was, indeed, a very stirring time to be alive in. It was a time like spring, when promise, opportunity, challenge, and growth appeared where none had been dreamed of before. Perhaps this is why there is so much poetry of springtime in the age of Shakespeare.

Edited with Introduction and Suggestions for Study by John Willoughby

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RICHARD
THE THIRD

By

William Shakespeare

General Introduction by Dr. David G. Patt

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare: His Life, Times, and Theatre

HIS LIFE

The world's greatest poet and playwright, often called the greatest Englishman, was born in Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, in the year 1564. The exact date of his birth is uncertain, but an entry in the *Stratford Parish Register* gives his baptismal date as April 26. Since children were usually baptized two or three days after birth, it is reasonable to assume that he was born on or about April 23—an appropriate day, being the feast of St. George, the patron saint of England.

His father, John Shakespeare, was a glover and dealer in wool and farm products, who had moved to Stratford from Snitterfield, four miles distant, some time before 1552. During his early years in Stratford his business prospered, enabling him to acquire substantial property, including several houses, and to take his place among the more considerable citizens of the town. In 1557 he married Mary, daughter of Robert Arden, a wealthy landowner of Wilmcote, not far from Stratford. Two daughters were born to them before William's birth—Joan, baptized in 1558, and Margaret, baptized in 1562—but both died in infancy. William was thus their third child, though the eldest of those who survived infancy. After him were born Gilbert (1566), another Joan (1569), Anne (1571), Richard (1574), and Edmund (1580).

Very little is positively known (though much is conjectured) about Shakespeare's boyhood and education. We know that for some years after William's birth his father's rise in Stratford society and municipal affairs continued. Many local offices came to him in rapid succession: ale-taster, burgess (a kind of constable), assessor of fines, chamberlain (town treasurer), high bailiff (a kind of magistrate), alderman (town councilor), and chief alderman in 1571. As the son of a man of such eminence in Stratford, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended the local Grammar School. This he was entitled to do free of charge, his father being a town councilor. No records of the school are extant, so that we do not know how good a pupil he was nor what subjects he studied. It is probable that he covered the usual Elizabethan curriculum: an "A B C book," the catechism in Latin and English, Latin grammar, the translation of Latin authors, and perhaps some Greek grammar and translation as well. But family circumstances appear to have curtailed his formal education before it was complete, for shortly before William reached his fourteenth birthday his father's rising fortunes abruptly passed their zenith.

Although we do not know all the facts, it is apparent that about the year 1578, having gone heavily into debt, John Shakespeare lost two large farms inherited by his wife from her father. Thereafter, he was involved in a series of lawsuits, and lost his post on the Stratford town council. Matters got steadily worse for him, until finally in 1586 he was declared a bankrupt. But by this time the future poet-dramatist was already a family man himself.

In 1582, in the midst of his father's legal and financial crises—and perhaps because of them—Shakespeare married Anne, daughter of Richard Hathaway (recently deceased) of the village of Shottery near Stratford. The

Episcopal Register for the Diocese of Worcester contains their marriage record, dated November 28, 1582; he was then in his eighteenth year and his wife in her twenty-sixth. On May 26 of the following year the *Stratford Parish Register* recorded the baptism of their first child, Susanna; and on February 2, 1585, the baptism of a twin son and daughter named Hamnet and Judith.

These facts are all that are known of Shakespeare's early life. How he supported his family, whether he took up some trade or profession, how long he continued to live in Stratford, we do not know for certain. Tradition and conjecture have bestowed on him many interim occupations between his marriage and his appearance in London in the early fifteen-nineties: printer, dyer, traveling-player, butcher, soldier, apothecary, thief—it reads like a children's augury-rhyme (when buttons or cherry-stones are read to learn one's fate). Perhaps only the last-named "pursuit" requires some explanation. According to several accounts, one of them appearing in the first *Life* of Shakespeare by Nicholas Rowe (1709), Shakespeare fell into bad company some time after his marriage, and on several occasions stole deer from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, a substantial gentleman of Charlecote, near Stratford. According to Rowe:

> For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him . . . and was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London.

The story has been repeated in varying forms by most subsequent biographers, but its authenticity is doubted by many who repeat it.

Another much more attractive story, which, however,

if true, does not necessarily deny the authenticity of Rowe's, is that Shakespeare during the so-called "lost-years" was a schoolmaster. This, indeed, appears to be somewhat better substantiated. John Aubrey, seventeenth-century biographer and antiquary, in his *Brief Lives* (1681) declares that he had learned from a theatrical manager, whose father had known Shakespeare, that the dramatist "had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." This may, then, account, in part at least, for the years between his marriage and his arrival in London about the year 1591. It is interesting to note that in two of his early plays Shakespeare includes a schoolmaster among his characters: Holofernes of *Love's Labour's Lost* and Pinch of *The Comedy of Errors*. But let us hope that neither is intended to be Shakespeare's portrait of himself!

However he may have occupied himself in the interim, we know that by 1592 he was already a budding actor and playwright in London. In that year Robert Greene in his autobiographical pamphlet *A Groatsworth of Wit*, referring to the young actors and menders of old plays who were, it seemed to him, gaining undeserved glory from the labours of their betters (both by acting their plays and by rewriting them), wrote as follows:

> Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shakescene in a countrey.

"Shakescene" is clearly Shakespeare. The phrase "upstart Crow" probably refers to his country origins and his lack of university education. "Beautified with our feath-

ers" probably means that he uses the older playwrights' words for his own aggrandisement either in plays in which he acts or in those he writes himself. "Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hyde" is a parody of a line in III *Henry VI*, one of the earliest plays ascribed to Shakespeare. And the Latin phrase *Johannes factotum*, meaning Jack-of-all-trades, suggests that he was at this time engaged in all sorts of theatrical jobs: actor, poet, playwright, and perhaps manager as well.

Greene died shortly after making this scurrilous attack on the young upstart from Stratford, and so escaped the resentment of those he had insulted. But Henry Chettle, himself a minor dramatist, who had prepared Greene's manuscript for the printer, in his *Kind-Harts Dreame* (1592), apologized to Shakespeare for his share in the offence.

> I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he excelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approoves his Art.

Thus, in a very indirect manner and because of an attack upon him by an irascible dying man, we learn that Shakespeare at this time was in fact held in high regard by "divers of worship," that is, by many of high birth, as an upright, honest young man of pleasant manners and manifest skill as an actor, poet, and playwright.

Although Shakespeare by 1593 had written, or written parts of, some five or six plays (I, II, and III *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and perhaps *Titus Andronicus*), it was as a non-dramatic poet that he first appeared in print. *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of*

Lucrece, long narrative poems, both bearing Shakespeare's name, were published in 1593 and 1594 respectively. But thereafter for the next twenty years he wrote almost nothing but drama. In his early period, 1591 to 1596, in addition to the plays named above he wrote *Love's Labour's Lost, The Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Richard II,* and *King John.* Then followed his great middle period, 1596 to 1600, during which he wrote both comedies and history-plays: *The Merchant of Venice,* I and II *Henry IV, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado about Nothing, Henry V, Julius Caesar, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night.* The period of his great tragedies and the so-called "dark comedies" followed (1600-1608): *Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Timon of Athens,* and *Coriolanus.* The last phase of his career as dramatist, 1608 to 1613, sometimes called "the period of the romances," produced *Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest,* parts of *Henry VIII,* and perhaps parts of *The Two Noble Kinsmen.* Many other plays were ascribed to him, but it is doubtful that he had a hand in any but those we have named. Long before his death in 1616 his name held such magic for the public that merely to print it on the title page of any play assured its popular acclaim. The "upstart Crow" had come a long way since 1592.

He had come a long way too from the economic straits that may well have driven him to London many years before. We know, for example, from the records of tax assessments that by 1596 Shakespeare was already fairly well-to-do. This is further borne out by his purchasing in the following year a substantial house known as New

Place and an acre of land in Stratford for £60, a sizable sum in those days. In 1602 he made a further purchase of 107 acres at Stratford for £320, and a cottage and more land behind his estate at New Place. But his life during this time was not quite unclouded. His only son, Hamnet, died in 1596 at the age of eleven years, his father in 1601, and his mother in 1608. All three were buried in Stratford. More happily he saw, in 1607, the marriage of his daughter Susanna to Dr. John Hall, an eminent physician of Stratford, and, in the following year, the baptism of his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall.

Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford appears to have been gradual, but by 1613, if not earlier, he seems to have settled there, though he still went up to London occasionally. Of the last months of his life we know little. We do know that in February, 1616, his second daughter, Judith, married Thomas Quiney. We know that on March 25, apparently already ill, Shakespeare revised and signed his will, among other bequests leaving to his wife his "second best bed with the furniture." A month later he was dead, dying on his fifty-second birthday, April 23, 1616. He was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, on April 26.

HIS TIMES

Shakespeare lived during the English Renaissance, that age of transition that links the Mediaeval and the Modern world. Inheriting the rich traditions of the Middle Ages in art, learning, religion, and politics, rediscovering the great legacies of classical culture, the men of the Renaissance went on to new and magnificent achievements in every phase of human endeavour. No other period in history saw such varied and prolific development and expansion. And the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603),

Shakespeare's age, was the High Renaissance in England.

Development and expansion—these are the watchwords of the age, and they apply to every aspect of life, thought, and activity. The universe grew in immensity as men gradually abandoned the old Ptolemaic view of a finite, earth-centered universe, accepting the enormous intellectual challenge of the illimitable cosmos of Copernicus's theory and Galileo's telescope. The earth enlarged, too, as more of its surface was discovered and charted by explorers following the lead of Columbus, Cabot, Magellan, and Vespucci. England itself expanded as explorers and colonizers, such as Frobisher, Davis, Gilbert, Raleigh, Grenville, Drake, and others, carried the English flag into many distant lands and seas; as English trade and commerce expanded with the opening of new markets and new sources of supply; as English sea power grew to protect the trading routes and fend off rivals, particularly Spain, the defeat of whose Invincible Armada in 1588 greatly advanced English national pride at home, and power and prestige abroad.

The world of ideas changed and expanded, too. The rediscovery and reinterpretation of the classics, with their broad and humane view of life, gave a new direction and impetus to secular education. During the Middle Ages theology had dominated education, but now the language, literature, and philosophy of the ancient world, the practical arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and training in morals, manners, and gymnastics assumed the major roles in both school and university—in other words, an education that fitted one for life in the world here and now replaced one that looked rather to the life hereafter. Not that the spiritual culture of man was neglected. Indeed, it took on a new significance, for as life in this world

acquired new meaning and value, religion assumed new functions, and new vitality to perform them, as the bond between the Creator and a new kind of creation.

It was, of course, the old creation—man and nature—but it was undergoing great changes. Some of these we have already seen, but the greatest was in man's conception of himself and his place in nature. The Mediaeval view of man was generally not an exalted one. It saw him as more or less depraved, fallen from Grace as a result of Adam's sin; and the things of this world, which was also "fallen," as of little value in terms of his salvation. Natural life was thought of mainly as a preparation for man's entry into Eternity. But Renaissance thought soon began to rehabilitate man, nature, and the things of this life. Without denying man's need for Grace and the value of the means of salvation provided by the Church, men came gradually to accept the idea that there were "goods," values, "innocent delights" to be had in the world here and now, and that God had given them for man to enjoy. Man himself was seen no longer as wholly vile and depraved, incapable even of desiring goodness, but rather as Shakespeare saw him in *Hamlet:*

> What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

And this is the conception of man that permeates Elizabethan thought and literature. It does not mean that man is incorruptible, immune to moral weakness and folly. Shakespeare has his villains, cowards, and fools. But man is none of these by nature; they are distortions of the true form of man. Nature framed him for greatness, endowed

him with vast capacities for knowledge, achievement, and delight, and with aspirations that may take him to the stars. "O brave new world, That has such people in 't!"

The chief object of man's aspiring mind is now the natural world, whose "wondrous architecture," says Marlowe's Tamburlaine, our souls strive ceaselessly to comprehend, "Still climbing after knowledge infinite." Hamlet, too, speaks of "this goodly frame, the earth . . . this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire." No longer the ruins of a fallen paradise and the devil's, nature is seen as man's to possess, her beauty and wonder to be sought after and enjoyed, her energies to be controlled and used—as Bacon expressed it, "for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate."

It was, indeed, a very stirring time to be alive in. New vistas were breaking upon the human mind and imagination everywhere. It was a time like spring, when promise, opportunity, challenge and growth appeared where none had been dreamed of before. Perhaps this is why there is so much poetry of springtime in the age of Shakespeare.

HIS THEATRE

There were many theatres, or playhouses, in Shakespeare's London. The first was built in 1576 by James Burbage and was called the *Theatre*. It was built like an arena, with a movable platform at one end, and had no seats in the pit, but had benches in the galleries that surrounded it. It was built of wood, and cost about £200. Other famous playhouses of Shakespeare's time, for the most part similarly constructed, included the Curtain, the Bull, the Rose, the Swan, the Fortune, and, most famous of them all, the Globe. It was built in 1599 by the sons of

James Burbage, and it was here that most of Shakespeare's plays were performed. Since more is known about the Globe than most of the others, I shall use it as the basis of the brief account that follows of the Elizabethan playhouse.

As its name suggests the Globe was a circular structure (the second Globe, built in 1614 after the first burned down, was octagonal), and was open to the sky, somewhat like a modern football or baseball stadium, though much smaller. It had three tiers of galleries surrounding the central "yard" or pit, and a narrow roof over the top gallery. But most interesting from our viewpoint was the stage—or rather *stages*—which was very different from that of most modern theatres. These have the familiar "picture-frame" stage: a raised platform at one end of the auditorium, framed by curtains and footlights, and viewed only from the front like a picture. Shakespeare's stage was very different.

The main stage, or *apron* as it was called, jutted well out into the pit, and did not extend all the way across from side to side. There was an area on either side for patrons to sit or stand in, so that actors performing on the apron could be viewed from three sides instead of one. In addition there was an inner stage, a narrow rectangular recess let into the wall behind the main stage. When not in use it could be closed by a curtain drawn across in front; when open it could be used for interior scenes, arbor scenes, tomb and anteroom scenes and the like. On either side of this inner stage were doors through which the main stage was entered. Besides the inner and outer stages there were no fewer than four other areas where the action of the play, or parts of it, might be performed. Immediately above the inner stage, and corre-

sponding to it in size and shape, was another room with its front exposed. This was the upper stage, and was used for upstairs scenes, or for storage when not otherwise in use. In front of this was a narrow railed gallery, which could be used for balcony scenes, or ones requiring the walls of a castle or the ramparts of a fortress. On either side of it and on the same level was a window-stage, so-called because it consisted of a small balcony enclosed by windows that opened on hinges. This permitted actors to stand inside and speak from the open windows to others on the main stage below. In all it was a very versatile multiple stage and gave the dramatist and producer much more freedom in staging than most modern theatres afford. It is interesting to note that some of the new theatres today have revived certain of the features of the Elizabethan stage.

Very little in the way of scenery and backdrops was used. The dramatist's words and the imagination of the audience supplied the lack of scenery. No special lighting effects were possible since plays were performed in the daylight that streamed in through the unroofed top of the three-tiered enclosure that was the playhouse. Usually a few standard stage props were on hand: trestles and boards to form a table, benches and chairs, flagons, an altar, artificial trees, weapons, a man's severed head, and a few other items. Costumes were usually elaborate and gorgeous, though no attempt was made to reproduce the dress of the time and place portrayed in the play.

Play production in Shakespeare's time was clearly very different from that of ours, but we need have no doubts about the audience's response to what they saw and heard on stage. They came, they saw, and the dramatist conquered, for they kept coming back for more and more.

And despite the opposition that the theatre encountered from Puritans and others, who thought it the instrument of Satan, the theatre in Shakespeare's time flourished as one of the supreme glories of a glorious age.

—DAVID G. PITT
Memorial University of Newfoundland.

INTRODUCTION TO

Richard the Third

Richard III has always been one of Shakespeare's most popular plays. Or perhaps it would be more precise to say that Richard, Duke of Gloucester, has always been one of Shakespeare's most popular characters—a heightened, superhuman version of the less consummately villainous Richard III of history, a larger-than-life creation whose sheer daring and insolent power appeal to the Satan (as well as to the Walter Mitty) in all of us. He does things that we cannot do; and he does them with a flair and with gusto.

To begin with, he has a way with words, which is seldom seen to better advantage than when he is professing his inability to manage them. "My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing words" (I, ii), he laments to Anne (who later remembers how easily her "woman's heart/ Grossly grew captive to his honey words" [IV, i]). Richard's protest to Queen Elizabeth that she has wrongly accused him of ill-will is expressed with precisely the rhetorical facility he professes not to have:

Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abused
With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

(I, iii)

Richard also has a fondness for equivocation, which he sometimes indulges simply for the pleasure it affords him as an intellectual game, as in the pun on "this sun of York" in his opening soliloquy. More frequently, however, Richard's word play seems designed to satisfy his sardonic sense of humor, as when he tells Clarence that his situation "Touches me deeper than you can imagine," and goes on to assure him, "Well, your imprisonment shall not be long; I will deliver you, or else lie for you" (I, i). Richard's response to the young Duke of York's request that he give him his dagger is similarly ironic: "My dagger, little cousin? with all my heart" (III, i).

Richard's frequent use of irony points up his consciousness of his own strength. Indeed, part of our delight in Richard is explained by his obvious delight in his triumphs. We share, for example, his own admiring wonderment at his beguiling of Anne:

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
. . . . . .
And yet to win her,—all the world to nothing!
Ha!

(I, ii)

Richard's exultant "Ha!" is the expression of a virtuoso's exquisite satisfaction at having brought off a difficult performance.

The art by which Richard prevails over Anne was clearly understood by the man whose funeral procession she is then accompanying. In *Henry VI, Part 3* (an earlier play which deals with the historical events immediately preceding those of *Richard III*), Shakespeare constructs a scene (V, vi) in which Richard has come to the Tower to murder the imprisoned Henry VI; and when the prison guard leaves them, Henry asks Richard with grim irony, "What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?" In a remarkable soliloquy earlier in the same play Richard contemplates "how to get the crown":

> Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile;
> And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart;
> And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
> And frame my face to all occasions.
> . . . . . .
> I can add colours to the chameleon;
> Change shapes with Proteus for advantages;
> And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
>
> (*Henry VI, Part* 3, III, ii)

The Richard of *Richard III* is in many respects different from the Richard of *Henry VI, Part 3*. He has, for example, a sense of humor which the earlier Richard lacked; and he is less of a caricature villain (partly, perhaps, because he no longer serves as a kind of foil to the saintly Henry VI). But our Richard is nothing if not an actor. He has superb command of a great variety of roles; and further, he knows which role is best suited for any given situation.

Perhaps that is part of the reason why Richard so enjoys his triumph over Anne: it calls into play so many of his roles. He is at first a man of authority whose imperious nature will brook no insubordination on the part of the men bearing the corpse. Turning to Anne, then, he engages her in a spirited rhetorical fencing match, neatly parrying her insults and execrations with witty equivocation and cheerful sophistry, and frequently taking the offensive with disarming thrusts of flattery. He remains thoroughly in control, at all times maintaining good cheer and incredible patience: he even manages to transform Anne's spitting in his face into a compliment to her! He is by turns the graceful but shrewd logician, the hopeful suppliant, the plain, inarticulate man, the loving son who himself has known familial bereavement, the tortured lover-from-afar, the poor devoted servant, and finally the repentant sinner. No wonder his performance leaves him exhilarated with the sense of his own power!

This chameleon-like adaptability serves Richard well in all of his dealings with people. For example, he tactfully treats the older of the two princes with solemn gravity and almost deferential politeness, but chooses to banter ironically with the more spirited and perspective young Duke of York. His hail-fellow-well-met demeanor with Hastings is totally successful: Hastings naïvely believes of Richard, "by his face straight shall you know his heart" (III, iv).

Richard, of course, has most difficulty with those people who are most fully aware of his duplicity: his mother, Buckingham, Derby, Margaret, and the citizens of London. With his mother he is usually evasive or curtly polite. On the other hand, Buckingham is treated as if he were a trusted confederate, and is even permitted to

seem to take the initiative in Richard's maneuverings to gain the throne. With Derby he is suspicious and threatening. With Margaret he stands toe-to-toe in rhetorical brawls; and though he never comes out of such frays unmarked, he usually gives as good as he gets. It is for the people, however, that Richard is forced to construct his most blatantly cynical histrionic performance. From the moment when Richard appears before the citizens between two clergymen ("Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,/To stay him from the fall of vanity" [III, vii]), he and Buckingham—who shines in his supporting role—put on a show worthy of those two other thespian scoundrels, the duke and the king in *Huckleberry Finn.* (Richard's and Buckingham's outrageous ironies also betray a contempt for their audience similar to that held by Mark Twain's "royalty": when Buckingham feigns exasperation with Richard's reluctance by huffing, "zounds, I'll entreat no more," the super-pious Richard is moved to exclaim, "O, do not swear, my Lord of Buckingham" [III, vii]).

This is the diabolic yet delightful Richard whose memory audiences cherish. Part of the fascination he holds for us, of course, is that he says No! in thunder to the power that rules the universe. At the center of Richard's universe is himself. Richard provides his own sanctions for his actions, and suggests that it would be just as well if God did not meddle in them. He proposes with jocular blasphemy that "God take King Edward to his mercy/And leave the world for me to bustle in" (I, i). Richard never repents, never submits his will to God's. Though he is momentarily shaken by the visitation of the ghosts (they are, after all, evidence of supernatural sanctions), he confirms himself in defiance and exhorts his soldiers:

March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.
(V, iii)

Moments later when Richard's horse is killed, and he is "Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death," Catesby urges him to flee the battle. Richard's shouted reply is a thoroughly characteristic blend of contempt, irony, and resolute will:

Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die.
(V, iv)

Men have for centuries been undecided about whether such action is heroism or utter folly, but clearly it is this Promethean quality in Richard's character that explains why, as George Bernard Shaw says, "We all have an old weakness for Richard."

Richard's dynamic personality so thoroughly dominates the early part of the play, however, (five of his ten soliloquies are in the first three scenes), that we scarcely notice the care Shakespeare has taken to provide what may be called countermovements to Richard. It is significant that we meet Richard first in soliloquy. He is alone, his overwhelmingly forceful presence commanding the stage as it does our imaginations. Then, as the play proceeds, we gradually move out into the larger context provided by the appearance of Richard's peers. But we come to realize that they differ from him not so much in kind as in degree; they are simply inferior in their capacity for evil. (How much less attractive than Richard's blasphemous defiance of God is the apparent submission to God's will

on the part of all those figures who perfunctorily, and rather too frequently, voice pious invocations to God? At least Richard is not being hypocritical with himself.)

We have relatively little sympathy, then, with the first victims of Richard's duplicity, all of whom may be seen as in some way deserving of their fate. But Shakespeare soon begins to place Richard's actions within the context of a larger moral framework. When Richard takes children as his victims, or citizens who have no real alternative to acquiescence in the dictates of royal power, our sympathetic identification with him rapidly diminishes; for these people are innocents, being *used* by Richard as if they were things, pawns in his egocentric game.

Moreover, as triumph follows triumph, Richard loses some of his more engaging traits. His earlier joyful consciousness of strength is increasingly tinged with scorn for others' weakness. He seems to become less detached in his view of himself; he loses something of his sense of humor, becomes more ruthless, more diabolically earnest, the closer he gets to the throne. And though in his opening soliloquy Richard confessed his hatred for the "idle pleasures" afforded by a time of peace, he increasingly becomes incapable of being at peace. His restlessness eventually takes the form of virtually compulsive activity and an insatiable lust for greater certainty of his power. He seems also to have a great fear of what Somerset Maugham calls "the bitterness of an end achieved." He is like a player, hoping the game will never end; an artist hoping the work will never be completed—for then he will know only terrifying boredom and restlessness, having only himself to come to grips with. (Anne tells us that when Richard *is* alone with himself—in sleep—he has bad dreams.) So that the remark we noted earlier about Richard's having set his life upon a cast of the die

can also be seen, not as an expression of his heroic defiance, but as evidence that, by his withdrawal from God's ordering of things, in preference for an order in which he himself is supreme, he has thrown away his freedom and surrendered himself to the essentially uncontrollable forces of chance.

Opposed to the forces of chance or fate is the vast cosmic order which constitutes the most all-encompassing and thoroughly pervasive context in which Shakespeare places Richard—that of Divine Providence. This is the order appealed to near the end of the play, when Richard's mother swears "by God's just ordinance" (IV, iv); or, in the play's final speech, when Richmond swears "by God's fair ordinance" (V, v).

Shakespeare's contemporary audience would have been much more responsive than we are to the force of such appeals to cosmic order. For the Elizabethans believed that the universe was a marvelously harmonious hierarchy, a magnificent "chain of being" in which everything has its proper and meaningful place. Hence the spectacle of disorder—whether it be in the heavens, the world of nature, the political state, or the mind of man—was genuinely frightening. Hamlet's remark that "The time is out of joint" meant far more than that things were going badly for him.

The principle of cosmic order was thought to be clearly discernible in the histories of individual men, of nations, and of mankind as a whole. So it is not surprising that histories should have been popular with the reading public, nor that they should eventually find their way onto the stage. It is thought by some scholars that Shakespeare may have been the first writer of "history plays," plays which dealt with the English history generally familiar to an Elizabethan audience, and which were thought to

teach in dramatic form the lessons to be learned from that history.

Shakespeare would seem to have been particularly interested in what could be learned from the history of the Wars of the Roses, the prolonged struggle which took place in the fifteenth century between the houses of York and Lancaster: eight of the ten history plays he wrote have to do with that period. *Richard III* deals with the final events in a movement of history initiated generations before when the Lancastrian King Henry IV deposed the Yorkist King Richard II (about which Shakespeare was later to write in *Richard II*).

Richard III, then, is about the end of an era, and clearly suggests that history is a purposive process, a working-out of "God's fair ordinance." Though the Yorkist Edward IV reigns as the play begins, Shakespeare has the corpse of the last Lancastrian king, Henry VI, brought onstage so that we are reminded of the bloody background against which the events of the play are to take place. And the play ends by looking forward to the reign of the first Tudor king, Henry VII (Richmond), whose marriage with Elizabeth will at last unite the White Rose of York and the Red Rose of Lancaster.

Henry VII is, of course, the grandfather of Queen Elizabeth I, during whose reign Shakespeare wrote *Richard III*. This has led some commentators to suggest that *Richard III* is evidence of Shakespeare's belief in "the Tudor myth" which saw Henry VII as a savior delivering England from the confusion and anarchy of the Wars of the Roses into a paradise of unity, order, and peace presided over by Tudor monarchs. Certainly Shakespeare's Richmond is more a symbol of heroic virtue than he is a believable human character (Shaw speaks of "the Rev. Pecksniff Richmond and his choir"). And the pattern of

the play is clearly apocalyptic. Richmond's entrance on-stage is very carefully prepared for: his name is first mentioned in Act IV, scene i; in the next scene we are told that Dorset has fled to join Richmond in France; then an Act later—after more than a dozen references to him—Richmond at last enters to slay the dragon Richard and usher in a new era of peace and plenty. (Shakespeare's play could scarcely deny the facts of history, of course: Richmond's forces did defeat Richard. And since Richard has earlier been presented as defying the power that rules the universe, his conqueror Richmond must be identified with that power if God's supreme justice is not to seem inferior.)

The structure of the play itself suggests the pattern of Divine Providence working itself out in history. Richard's first words, "Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by this sun of York," suggest the cyclic movement of the seasons; and near the end of the play the suggestion is picked up by Richmond's first words, which speak of "The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,/That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines" (V, ii). Again, Richmond's last words in the play, "Now civil wounds are stopt . . ." point back to Anne's horrified observation that in the presence of Richard "dead Henry's wounds . . . bleed afresh" (I, ii). Further, in the play's opening speech, Richard expresses discomfort because "Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front"; in the play's final speech, Richmond prophesies that his heirs will "Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace." Surely this movement from a premature summer to a genuine one, from a false peace to a true one, is simply a less overt way of saying what Margaret says in Act IV:

"Thus hath the course of justice wheel'd about" (IV, iv).

Margaret, the aged widow of Henry VI, is an important figure in the play. Shakespeare keeps her quite unhistorically alive to serve as a vivid reminder of the continuity of history, of the way in which past, present, and future are inextricably bound up with one another. Margaret's reiterated lamentation of past losses, and her curses promising future retribution for them, have the effect of insistently pointing to this linking of generation with generation, and of the present moment with past and future ones in our lives.

We are reminded of this also by the extraordinarily numerous recollections of the past and anticipations of the future in *Richard III*. The play contains a whole network of prophetic curses and dreams which are recollected with pointed regularity at the moment of their fulfillment: Buckingham's speech before he is executed is a good example.

At the beginning of Act IV, scene iv, Margaret comments on the course of Richard's history:

> So, now prosperity begins to mellow,
> And drop into the rotten mouth of death.

The image is one of ripeness—or indeed of over-ripeness—and it suggests a concept of time as process, of time as slowly but inexorably fulfilling itself. It also suggests death and decay, of course, and reflects ironically on Richmond's first words about summer and sun and growth. Moreover, it suggests the untimeliness of Richard's acts, since to see time as process requires a patience that Richard does not have—the sort of patience witnessed by Edgar's words in *King Lear* (V, ii), "Ripeness

is all." Richard (who was "sent before [his] time into this breathing world") is impatient; he becomes less and less able to wait for time to fulfill itself; and the more he tries to hurry time along, the less control he has over it. The manner in which he is out of step with time (and hence with history and God) is made explicit by Elizabeth's mocking of his assertion that he will swear an oath by "time to come":

> The children live, whose fathers thou hast slaughter'd,
> Ungovern'd youth, to wail it in their age;
> The parents live, whose children thou hast butcher'd,
> Old wither'd plants, to wail it with their age.
> Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast
> Misused ere used, by time misused o'erpast.
>
> (IV, iv)

Hence, just as Richard's character is first seen by itself and then is placed in the larger contexts of society and of cosmic order, so his actions are at first seen simply in the present and then placed in the larger context of past and future time, and finally in the context of eternity.

Shakespeare was less than thirty when he wrote *Richard III* in 1592 or '93. It is one of his earliest plays and bears unmistakable marks of indebtedness to his great contemporary, Christopher Marlowe, as well as to other dramatists whose work reflected the influence of the Roman tragedian, Seneca. As has been suggested, it is a very highly patterned play, in detail as well as in outline; and though this patterning is of great thematic significance, many audiences find the cumulative effect of the ritualistic lamentations and curses and the bouts of exquisitely balanced repartee to be theatrically tiresome.

Moreover, the play casts Richard in the role of protagonist, but it pits him against an invincible antagonist (Richmond, after all, is God's "captain" [V, iii]). Both English history and the moral expectations of Shakespeare's audience demand that Richard be defeated. But in order to prepare us psychologically for Richard's death Shakespeare changes him from the humanly treacherous, yet superhumanly powerful, comic-devil figure he was at the beginning to a melodramatic villain at the end. Richard at the end of the play—except for the last-moment recovery of his old "hand-in-hand-to-hell" spirits—is little more than a villain whose evil must be punished by the pristine goodness of heroic Richmond. Justice is done; the evil are punished and the good are rewarded (Lord Stanley's son is not beheaded after all). As John Dover Wilson says, in his excellent edition of *Richard III*, "the reiteration of its conventional morality keeps the audience 'feeling good,' while leaving them free to enjoy the wickedness of the villain to their heart's content; a double satisfaction which is of the essence of melodrama."

One imagines that this double satisfaction gave Shakespeare's contemporary audience enormous pleasure. Though we have perhaps lost their notions of providential history, we still have Richard; and we ought to be grateful for him. He is a *rara avis*, a harbinger full of promise for the genuinely glorious summer that was to come.

JOHN WILLOUGHBY
York University

STUDY QUESTIONS

ACT I

1. What advantages or disadvantages are there in beginning a play with a soliloquy by its central figure? Do you know if Shakespeare did so in any of his other plays?

2. How many soliloquies are there in this play? How many asides? Was the Elizabethan stage particularly well suited for soliloquies and asides?

3. How seriously ought we to take Richard's remark, "Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women" (I; i)? What would you say is his attitude toward women in general? Are we told anything about Richard which may help to explain his attitude?

4. What various means of persuasion does Richard use in his wooing of Anne?

5. Analyze Shakespeare's handling of "thou" and "you" in the scene between Richard and Anne.

6. Richard protests to Anne that if he is being false in his courtship of her, "Then never man was true." What do we learn about Richard's character by this remark?

7. Anne calls Richard, among other things, a hedgehog. Make note of the many animal images associated with-

Richard throughout the play. What kind of animals is he compared to?

8. What is suggested about Richard by his remark, "Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,/And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun" (I, iii)? Would Shakespeare have expected his audience to recognize the reference to Ezekiel 17:3?

9. What is the significance for the play as a whole of Brackenbury's observation, "Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,/Makes the night morning, and the noontide night" (I, iv)?

ACT II

1. What is the cumulative effect of the many appeals to God which are made in scene i?

2. What do we learn of Edward's character in scene i? How does this affect our response to Richard?

3. How does the scene between the Duchess of York and her grandchildren affect our response to Richard?

4. What dramatic purpose is served by Rivers' question, "Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?" (II, ii)? How would you have the actor speak this line? What dramatic purpose is served by Buckingham's reply to Rivers' question?

5. What seems to be the relationship between Richard and Buckingham?

6. What dramatic purposes are served by the scene with the three citizens?

7. Discuss Shakespeare's characterization of children in this Act.

ACT III

1. Richard compares himself to "the formal Vice, Iniquity" (III, i). Discover what you can about Morality plays and their influence on *Richard III*.

2. If you were directing the play, how would you have Richard say "Chop off his head" (III, i)? Would the next three lines be spoken in the same tone?

3. How does Shakespeare prepare us in scene ii for Hastings' fall? Why is Derby (sometimes called Lord Stanley) contrasted with Hastings?

4. What dramatic purposes are served by scene iii?

5. Do you believe Buckingham in his speech beginning, "We know each other's faces"? Why or why not?

6. What is the effect of Richard's mentioning "that harlot-strumpet Shore" (III, iv): (a) upon Richard's audience; and (b) upon the theatre audience?

7. What is the effect of the "echoes" set up by Hastings' speech beginning, "O momentary grace of mortal men" (III, iv)?

8. Buckingham assures Richard, "I'll play the orator/As if the golden fee for which I plead/Were for myself" (III, v). Is there any evidence that he may in fact have designs upon the throne?

9. More than two centuries after Shakespeare's death, Hans Christian Andersen wrote a fairy tale called "The Emperor's New Clothes." It offers interesting parallels (and contrasts) to scene vi which you may enjoy discovering.

10. What is suggested by Buckingham's saying that the

Mayor "nothing spake in warrant from himself" (III, vii)? And what is the dramatic effect of Buckingham's reporting the citizens' attitude before he and Richard give their performance?

ACT IV

1. In this Act, both the Lady Anne and Margaret appear on stage for the first time since Act I. What dramatic effects does Shakespeare gain by bringing them back at this particular point in the play after so long an absence?

2. Scene ii is often described as the turning point in the play. What evidence do you find to support this view?

3. What is the effect of Richard's remembering Henry VI's prophecy (IV, ii), and mocking it?

4. What do you suppose would have been Buckingham's response to Richard's plans for the princes if Richard had kept his promise to him?

5. Compare Shakespeare's handling of the murder of the princes with that of the murder of Clarence (I, iv).

6. "To her go I, a jolly thriving wooer" (IV, iii). This is Richard's last jocularity. What do you suppose prompts it? What is its dramatic effect?

7. What is expressed by Richard's single word, "So," in scene iv?

8. Examine Shakespeare's pacing of the action in scene iv. What is the effect of following long speeches by a flurry of people coming and going, bringing news?

9. Compare Richard's attitude toward Elizabeth after she leaves (IV, iv) with his attitude toward Anne

after she had left (I, ii). What does Richard's behavior subsequent to Elizabeth's departure suggest about the effect her arguments have had upon him?

10. Why does Shakespeare tell us here (scene v), rather than simply at the end of the play, that the young Elizabeth is to marry Richmond?

ACT V

1. Discuss Shakespeare's handling of dramatic pace in this Act.

2. Historically, Buckingham was executed on All Saints' Day. Why does Shakespeare change it to All Souls' Day? What are the opening words of the Mass that is said on All Souls' Day?

3. Richmond makes his first appearance onstage in scene ii, in which the word "friends" is used five times. With what effect?

4. What is characteristic about Richard's remark, "The king's name is a tower of strength" (V, iii)?

5. What means does Shakespeare use to contrast Richard and Richmond in scene iii?

6. What are the distinctive features of Shakespeare's handling of the ghost scene? Why do you think he handles it this way?

7. George Bernard Shaw cites "the curious recovery by Richard of his old gaiety of heart in the excitement of the battle. . . . he is again the ecstatic prince of mischief of the 'Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass' phase which makes the first act so rapturous." What evidence is there in Act V of "the old Richard"?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. *Richard III* is the longest of all Shakespeare's plays except *Hamlet*, and is often cut for stage performance. If you were directing the play, what would you leave out, and why?

2. Review the history of the Wars of the Roses. How many instances can you discover of Shakespeare's having changed it to suit his dramatic purposes?

3. What significance does the role of Margaret, Buckingham, Hastings, or Derby have for the play as a whole?

4. List all of the references to the stage and acting that you can find in *Richard III*. What is the cumulative effect of these references?

5. a) Though it has many varieties, irony generally involves an awareness of a discrepancy between what is and what seems to be. In what might be called "irony of statement," for example, a person says something whose ostensible meaning is deliberately opposite to his real meaning or attitude. In "dramatic irony," on the other hand, the audience in a theatre perceives a meaning in a character's words or acts of which the character himself is unaware. How many examples of each of these two elementary kinds of irony can you find in *Richard III*? What is the appeal of irony: (a) for a dramatist; (b) for the audience? b) Discuss some of the various kinds of "patterning" in *Richard III;* that is, the manner in which certain words, lines, images, scenes, or characters are brought into juxtaposition in order that we may have a greater understanding of them through an awareness of sig-

nificant similarities and differences between them. You may also wish to consider what further purposes are served by the unusually large amount of such patterning in *Richard III*.

JOHN WILLOUGHBY
York University

KING RICHARD THE THIRD

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING EDWARD THE FOURTH.

EDWARD, *Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward V.*,
RICHARD, *Duke of York*,
} *sons to the King.*

GEORGE, *Duke of Clarence*,
RICHARD, *Duke of Gloster, afterwards King Richard III.*,
} *brothers to the King.*

A YOUNG SON OF CLARENCE.

HENRY, *Earl of Richmond, afterwards King Henry VII.*

CARDINAL BOURCHIER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

THOMAS ROTHERHAM, *Archbishop of York.*

JOHN MORTON, *Bishop of Ely.*

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

EARL OF SURREY, *his son.*

EARL RIVERS, *brother to Elizabeth.*

MARQUESS OF DORSET *and* LORD GREY, *sons to Elizabeth.*

EARL OF OXFORD.

LORD HASTINGS.

LORD STANLEY, *call'd also Earl of Derby.*

LORD LOVEL.

SIR THOMAS VAUGHAN.

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

SIR JAMES BLOUNT.

SIR WALTER HERBERT.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY, *lieutenant of the Tower.*

CHRISTOPHER URSWICK, *a priest.* ANOTHER PRIEST.

Continued

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON. SHERIFF OF WILTSHIRE.

TRESSEL *and* BERKELEY, *attending on Lady Anne.*

ELIZABETH, *queen to King Edward IV.*

MARGARET, *widow of King Henry VI.*

DUCHESS OF YORK, *mother to King Edward IV., Clarence and Gloster.*

LADY ANNE, *widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, son to King Henry VI.; afterwards married to Richard, Duke of Gloster.*

A YOUNG DAUGHTER OF CLARENCE (MARGARET PLANTAGENET).

LORDS *and other* ATTENDANTS; *a* PURSUIVANT, SCRIVENER, CITIZENS, MURDERERS, MESSENGERS, SOLDIERS, *&c.*

SCENE—*England.*

RICHARD THE THIRD

ACT 1

ACT I

RICHARD, Duke of Gloucester, whose oldest brother now reigns as King Edward IV, complains in his opening soliloquy that he is by nature ill-fitted for the present "weak piping time of peace," and reveals that he has initiated a plot to have his other brother, George Duke of Clarence, imprisoned upon suspicion of intending to murder the King. Then, meeting Clarence being led away to prison, Richard deceitfully persuades him that his captivity is the doing of Queen Elizabeth and her relatives, and protests that he will labor for Clarence's deliverance.

Richard next meets the Lady Anne accompanying the funeral procession of her father-in-law, the late King Henry VI. Having decided earlier that marriage with Anne is politically expedient, Richard audaciously begins to court her. His virtuoso rhetorical performance and the sheer force of his personality enthrall her, and she consents to accept his ring.

Richard's next performance is at the palace. Queen Elizabeth, Earl Rivers, and Lord Grey have been discussing the King's poor health, and the sad prospect of Richard's being declared Protector of young Edward Prince of Wales in the event of King Edward's death, when Buckingham brings news of the King's wishes to reconcile the Queen's kindred with Richard. Richard then enters, vehemently protesting that he is a simple, unceremonious man whose nature has been grievously mistaken, and that the Queen is guilty of defaming him and Clarence.

Margaret, the aged widow of Henry VI, enters while Richard and Elizabeth are exchanging recriminations. At first, she is not noticed by the others; then she confronts them, invoking God's vengeance upon them for their crimes against the House of Lancaster. When she eventually leaves, Margaret warns that her curses are prophetic. The others leave shortly afterwards; but not before Richard has lamented Clarence's imprisonment. He then confers with the two murderers who are to kill Clarence.

At the prison, Clarence tells his keeper of a haunting dream he had the night before—a dream about death, the afterlife, and conscience which has prompted him to repent the crimes of which he is guilty. As Clarence again sleeps, his murderers arrive. They argue briefly about conscience and "judgement-day," and Clarence awakens; he urges the damnability of the act they have been sent to do, but is brutally murdered.

ACT I. SCENE I.

London. A street.

Enter RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOSTER, *solus.*

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;[1]
And all the clouds that lour'd [2] upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised [3] arms hung up for monuments;[4]
Our stern alarums[5] changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.[6]
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;[7]
And now—instead of mounting barbed [8] steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries—
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stampt, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd [9] of this fair proportion,[10]
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,[11]
Deform'd, unfinisht, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable[12]
That dogs bark at me as I halt[13] by them;—
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,[14]
Have no delight to pass away the time,

[1] **sun of York:** Edward the IV was the son of Richard, Duke of York: he also wore the Yorkist heraldic badge of the blazing sun. [2] **lour'd:** frowned. [3] **bruised:** battered. [4] **monuments:** memorials. [5] **alarums:** trumpet calls for attack. [6] **measures:** dance steps. [7] **wrinkled front:** frowning forehead. [8] **barbed:** caparisoned with the trappings of war. [9] **curtail'd:** cut short. [10] **fair proportion:** handsome physique. [11] **dissembling nature:** deceitful nature, which hides the true character of men. [12] **unfashionable:** misshapen. [13] **halt:** limp. [14] **weak piping time of peace:** that is, when the only music heard is that of the tabor or the flute.

Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
And descant on[1] mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,[2]
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,[3]
By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other:
And, if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,[4]
About a prophecy, which says that G [5]
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul:—here Clarence comes.

Enter CLARENCE, *guarded, and* BRAKENBURY.

Brother, good day: what means this armed guard
That waits upon your Grace?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

His majesty,
Tendering my person's safety,[6] hath appointed
This conduct[7] to convey me to the Tower.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Upon what cause?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Because my name is George.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours;
He should, for that, commit your godfathers:—
O, belike[8] his majesty hath some intent

[1] **descant on:** make a song about. [2] **fair well-spoken days:** i.e., days of peace. [3] **inductions dangerous:** "beginnings of mischief" —Wright. [4] **mew'd up:** shut up (in prison). [5] **G:** George; hence, Duke of Clarence. [6] **Tendering my person's safety:** being concerned about my personal safety. [7] **conduct:** escort. [8] **belike:** probably.

That you shall be new-christen'd in the Tower.
But what's the matter, Clarence? may I know?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest
As yet I do not: but, as I can learn,
He hearkens after[1] prophecies and dreams;
And from the cross-row[2] plucks the letter G,
And says a wizard told him that by G
His issue[3] disinherited should be;
And, for[4] my name of George begins with G,
It follows in his thought that I am he.
These, as I learn, and such-like toys[5] as these,
Have moved his highness to commit me now.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women:—
'Tis not the king that sends you to the Tower;
My Lady Grey[6] his wife, Clarence, 'tis she
That tempers him to this extremity.[7]
Was it not she, and that good man of worship,
Antony Woodville,[8] her brother there,
That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,
From whence this present day he is deliver'd?
We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

By heaven, I think there's no man is secure
But the queen's kindred, and night-walking heralds
That trudge betwixt the king and Mistress Shore.[9]
Heard ye not what an humble suppliant
Lord Hastings was to her for his delivery? [10]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Humbly complaining to her deity
Got my lord chamberlain[11] his liberty.

[1] **hearkens after:** heeds; listens to. [2] **cross-row:** alphabet (so-called because of the cross once prefixed to it. [3] **issue:** children. [4] **for:** because. [5] **such-like toys:** similar fancies. [6] **Lady Grey:** the queen, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Woodville, and who is the widow of Sir John Grey. [7] **tempers . . . extremity:** stirs him up to this extreme action. [8] **Antony Woodville:** Earl Rivers—and the object of Richard's deep hatred and contempt. [9] **Mistress Shore:** Jane Shore, King Edward's mistress. [10] **his delivery:** his release from prison. [11] **lord chamberlain:** Hastings.

I'll tell you what,—I think it is our way,
If we will keep in favour with the king,
To be her men,[1] and wear her livery:
The jealous[2] o'erworn widow[3] and herself,
Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen,[4]
Are mighty gossips in this monarchy.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

I beseech your Graces both to pardon me;
His majesty hath straitly given in charge[5]
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree[6] soever, with his brother.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Even so; an 't[7] please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of [8] any thing we say:
We speak no treason, man;—we say the king
Is wise and virtuous; and his noble queen
Well struck in years,[9] fair, and not jealous;—
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing[10] pleasing tongue;
And that the queen's kindred are made gentlefolks:
How say you, sir? can you deny all this?

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

With this, my lord, myself have naught to do.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Naught to do with Mistress Shore! I tell thee, fellow,
He that doth naught with her, excepting one,
Were best to do it secretly, alone.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

What one, my lord?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Her husband, knave:—wouldst thou betray me?

[1] **men:** servants. [2] **jealous:** suspicious-natured. [3] **o'erworn widow:** the queen was a widow when she married Edward. [4] **dubb'd them gentlewomen:** elevated them to gentlewomen—a slur on Richard's part, since the queen was gently born, and here he tries to put her on an equal footing with Mistress Shore as "gossips," or close friends. [5] **straitly given in charge:** strictly ordered. [6] **degree:** rank. [7] **an 't:** if it. [8] **partake of:** listen to; share. [9] **Well struck in years:** i.e., not young. [10] **passing:** surpassingly; exceedingly.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

I beseech your Grace to pardon me; and, withal,[1]
Forbear[2] your conference with the noble duke.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

We are the queen's abjects,[3] and must obey.—
Brother, farewell: I will unto the king;
And whatsoe'er you will employ me in,—
Were it[4] to call King Edward's widow sister,—
I will perform it to enfranchise you.[5]
Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood
Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;
I will deliver you, or else lie for you:[6]
Meantime, have patience.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

I must perforce: farewell.

[*Exeunt* CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, *and* GUARD.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Go, tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return,
Simple, plain Clarence!—I do love thee so,
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,
If heaven will take the present at our hands.—
But who comes here? the new-deliver'd[7] Hastings?

Enter HASTINGS.

LORD HASTINGS.

Good time of day[8] unto my gracious lord!

[1] **withal:** moreover. [2] **Forbear:** give up. [3] **abjects:** the lowest servants (with a play on *subjects*). [4] **Were it:** even if it were. [5] **enfranchise you:** set you free. [6] **lie for you:** Richard's double meaning is, "I shall go to prison in your place," and "I shall tell lies about you." [7] **new-deliver'd:** newly released. [8] **Good time of day:** a common salutation.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

As much unto my good lord chamberlain!
Well are you welcome to the open air.
How hath your lordship brookt[1] imprisonment?

LORD HASTINGS.

With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must:
But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks
That were the cause of my imprisonment.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;
For they that were your enemies are his,
And have prevail'd as much on him as you.

LORD HASTINGS.

More pity that the eagle should be mew'd,[2]
While kites[3] and buzzards prey at liberty.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What news abroad?

LORD HASTINGS.

No news so bad abroad as this at home,—
The king is sickly, weak, and melancholy
And his physicians fear him[4] mightily.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Now, by Saint Paul, this news is bad indeed.
O, he hath kept an evil diet long,[5]
And overmuch consumed his royal person:
'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.
What, is he in his bed?

LORD HASTINGS.

He is.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Go you before, and I will follow you. [*Exit* HASTINGS.
He cannot live, I hope; and must not die

[1] **brookt:** endured; tolerated.
[2] **mew'd:** caged; shut up.
[3] **kites:** a voracious and lowly bird of prey.
[4] **fear him:** fear for him.
[5] **kept an evil diet long:** that is, he has led a self-indulgent life.

Till George[1] be packt with post-horse[2] up to heaven.
I'll in, to urge his hatred more to Clarence,
With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;
And, if I fail not in my deep intent,[3]
Clarence hath not another day to live:
Which done, God take King Edward to His mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in!
For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter:[4]
What though I kill'd her husband and her father? [5]
The readiest way to make the wench amends,
Is to become her husband and her father:
The which will I; not all so much for love
As for another secret close intent,
By marrying her which I must reach unto.
But yet I run before my horse to market:[6]
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns:
When they are gone, then must I count my gains. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

The same. Another street.

Enter the corse[7] *of* HENRY THE SIXTH, *with halberds*[8] *to guard it,* LADY ANNE *being the mourner;* TRESSEL *and* BERKELEY.

LADY ANNE.

Set down, set down your honourable load,—
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse,—
Whilst I awhile obsequiously[9] lament
Th' untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.

[1] **George:** the Duke of Clarence. [2] **with post-horse:** by the speediest means possible. [3] **deep intent:** wicked intention. [4] **Warwick's youngest daughter:** Lady Anne, widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, and daughter of the Earl of Warwick ("the kingmaker"). [5] **her father:** her father-in-law, Henry VI. [6] **But . . . market:** that is, I count my chickens before they are hatched. [7] ***corse:*** corpse. [8] ***halberds:*** sharp-edged blades on long staffs. [9] **obsequiously:** as a dutiful mourner.

Poor key-cold [1] figure of a holy king!
Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!
Be it lawful that I invocate thy ghost,[2]
To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughter'd son,
Stabb'd by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!
Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life,
I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes:—
O, cursed be the hand that made these holes!
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it!
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!
More direful hap betide[3] that hated wretch,
That makes us wretched by the death of thee,
Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!
If ever he have child, abortive[4] be it,
Prodigious,[5] and untimely brought to light,[6]
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view;
And that be heir to his unhappiness!
If ever he have wife, let her be made
More miserable by the death of him
Than I am made by my young lord and thee!—
Come, now towards Chertsey[7] with your holy load,
Taken from Paul's[8] to be interred there;
And still,[9] as you are weary of the weight,
Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corse.

Enter GLOSTER.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Stay,[10] you that bear the corse, and set it down.

[1] **key-cold:** as cold as a metal key. [2] **Be it lawful . . . ghost:** it was not lawful for Protestants to invoke the saints. [3] **direful hap betide:** bad luck befall. [4] **abortive:** unnatural; premature. [5] **Prodigious:** abnormal; like a monster. [6] **untimely brought to light:** born prematurely. [7] **Chertsey:** a town in Surrey near the Thames. [8] **Paul's:** St. Paul's Church. [9] **still:** in the meantime. [10] **Stay:** wait.

LADY ANNE.

What black magician conjures up this fiend,
To stop devoted charitable deeds?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Villains, set down the corse; or, by Saint Paul
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys!

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Unmanner'd dog! stand thou, when I command.
Advance thy halberd higher than my breast,
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot,
And spurn upon thee,[1] beggar, for thy boldness.

LADY ANNE.

What, do you tremble? are you all afraid?
Alas, I blame you not; for you are mortal,
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.—
Avaunt,[2] thou dreadful minister[3] of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,—
His soul thou canst not have; therefore, be gone.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.[4]

LADY ANNE.

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.
O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh![5]
Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
For 'tis thy presence that exhales[6] this blood

[1] **spurn upon thee:** trample you underfoot. [2] **Avaunt:** be gone. [3] *minister:* *agent.* [4] **curst:** *spiteful; shrewish.* [5] **bleed afresh:** *it* was a common belief in Shakespeare's day that a victim's wounds bled when the murderer was present. [6] **exhales:** draws forth.

From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,
Provokes this deluge most unnatural.—
O God, which this blood mad'st, revenge his death!
O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!
Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead;
Or, earth, gape open wide, and eat him quick,[1]
As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood,
Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Lady, you know no rules of charity,
Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

LADY ANNE.

Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man:
No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

LADY ANNE.

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

More wonderful, when angels are so angry.—
Vouchsafe,[2] divine perfection of a woman,
Of these supposed evils, to give me leave,
By circumstance,[3] but to acquit myself.

LADY ANNE.

Vouchsafe, defused [4] infection of a man,
For these known evils, but to give me leave,
By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

[1] **quick**: alive.
[2] **Vouchsafe**: condescend.
[3] **By circumstance**: by detailed account or argument.
[4] **defused**: diffused; disordered (*shapeless*).

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have
Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

LADY ANNE.

Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make
No excuse current,[1] but to hang thyself.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

By such despair, I should accuse myself.

LADY ANNE.

And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused
For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,
That didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Say that I slew them not?

LADY ANNE.

Why, then, they are not dead:
But dead they are, and, devilish slave, by thee.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I did not kill your husband.

LADY ANNE.

Why, then, he is alive.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.

LADY ANNE.

In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw
Thy murderous falchion[2] smoking in his blood;
The which thou once didst bend against her breast,
But that thy brothers beat aside the point.[3]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,

[1] **excuse current:** valid excuse.
[2] **falchion:** curved sword.
[3] ***point:*** *the point of the sword.*

That laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

LADY ANNE.

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind,
That never dreamt on aught but butcheries:
Didst thou not kill this king?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I grant ye.

LADY ANNE.

Dost grant me, hedgehog? [1] then, God grant me too
Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!
O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

LADY ANNE.

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Let him thank me, that holp[2] to send him thither;
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

LADY ANNE.

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

LADY ANNE.

Some dungeon.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Your bed-chamber.

LADY ANNE.

Ill rest betide[3] the chamber where thou liest!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

So will it, madam, till I lie with you.

LADY ANNE.

I hope so.

[1] **hedgehog:** an allusion to Richard's being a hunchback, and also to his crest of a wild boar.
[2] **holp:** helped.
[3] **betide:** befall.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,—
To leave this keen encounter of our wits,
And fall somewhat into a slower method,—
Is not the causer of the timeless[1] deaths
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,
As blameful as the executioner?

LADY ANNE.

Thou wast the cause and most accurst effect.[2]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Your beauty was the cause of that effect;
Your beauty, that did haunt me in my sleep
To undertake the death of all the world,
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

LADY ANNE.

If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,[3]
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

These eyes could not endure that beauty's wrack;[4]
You should not blemish it, if I stood by:
As all the world is cheered by the sun,
So I by that; it is my day, my life.

LADY ANNE.

Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Curse not thyself, fair creature; thou art both.

LADY ANNE.

I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To be revenged on him that loveth thee.

[1] **timeless:** untimely.
[2] **effect:** agent; executioner.
[3] **homicide:** murderer.
[4] **wrack:** wreck; ruin.

LADY ANNE.

It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that kill'd my husband.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.

LADY ANNE.

His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

He lives that loves thee better than he could.

LADY ANNE.

Name him.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Plantagenet.

LADY ANNE.

Why, that was he.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

The selfsame name, but one of better nature.

LADY ANNE.

Where is he?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Here. [*She spits at him.*] Why dost thou spit at me?

LADY ANNE.

Would it were mortal [1] poison, for thy sake!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

LADY ANNE.

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.[2]
Out of my sight! thou dost infect mine eyes.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

LADY ANNE.

Would they were basilisks,[3] to strike thee dead!

[1] **mortal:** deadly.
[2] **fouler toad:** toads were thought to be poisonous.
[3] **basilisk:** also cockatrice; a fabulous creature with a cock's head, an animal's body, and a snake's head, which could kill by its look or breath.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I would they were, that I might die at once;
For now they kill me with a living death.
Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,
Shamed their aspects with store of childish drops:[1]
These eyes, which never shed remorseful tear,
No, when my father York and Edward wept
To hear the piteous moan that Rutland [2] made
When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him;
Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,
Told the sad story of my father's death,
And twenty times made pause[3] to sob and weep,
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks,
Like trees bedasht[4] with rain; in that sad time
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,[5]
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.
I never sued to friend nor enemy;
My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing[6] words;
But, now thy beauty is proposed my fee,[7]
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.
[She looks scornfully at him.
Teach not thy lips such scorn; for they were made
For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.
If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;
Which if thou please to hide in this true breast,
And let the soul forth that adoreth thee,
I lay it naked to the deadly[8] stroke,

[1] **Shamed . . . drops:** put their glances to shame with childish tears. [2] **Rutland:** Richard's brother, Edmund, Earl of Rutland. [3] **made pause:** stopped. [4] **bedasht:** splashed. [5] **exhale:** draw forth. [6] **smoothing:** soothing; flattering. [7] **now thy . . . fee:** now that your beauty is offered as my reward. [8] **deadly:** fatal.

And humbly beg the death upon my knee.[1]

[He lays his breast open; she offers at it with his sword.

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,
But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.
Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward,
But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

[She falls the sword.

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

LADY ANNE.

Arise, dissembler:[2] though I wish thy death,
I will not be thy executioner.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

LADY ANNE.

I have already.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

That was in thy rage:
Speak it again, and, even with the word,
This hand, which for thy love did kill thy love,
Shall for thy love kill a far truer love;
To both their deaths shalt thou be accessary.[3]

LADY ANNE.

I would I knew thy heart.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

'Tis figured [4] in my tongue.

LADY ANNE.

I fear me both are false.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Then never man was true.

LADY ANNE.

Well, well, put up your sword.

[1] **upon my knee:** on bended knee.
[2] **dissembler:** hypocrite.
[3] **accessary:** accessory.
[4] **figured:** portrayed.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Say, then, my peace is made.

LADY ANNE.

That shalt thou know hereafter.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

But shall I live in hope?

LADY ANNE.

All men, I hope, live so.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Vouchsafe[1] to wear this ring.

LADY ANNE.

To take, is not to give.[2]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Look, how this ring encompasseth thy finger,
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.
And if thy poor devoted servant may
But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,
Thou dost confirm his happiness for ever.

LADY ANNE.

What is it?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

That it may please you leave these sad designs[3]
To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,
And presently[4] repair to Crosby-place;[5]
Where—after I have solemnly interr'd
At Chertsey monastery this noble king,
And wet his grave with my repentant tears—
I will with all expedient[6] duty see you:
For divers[7] unknown[8] reasons, I beseech you,
Grant me this boon.[9]

LADY ANNE.

With all my heart; and much it joys me too

[1] **Vouchsafe:** grant me the favor (honor). [2] **To take, is not to give:** although I take your ring, it does not mean that I give you myself (pledge my troth). [3] **sad designs:** mournful obsequies. [4] **presently:** immediately. [5] **Crosby-place:** Crosby House or Crosby Place, Richard's house in London. [6] **expedient:** expeditious. [7] **divers:** various. [8] **unknown:** secret. [9] **boon:** favor; wish.

To see you are become so penitent.—
Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Bid me farewell.

LADY ANNE.

'Tis more than you deserve;
But since you teach me how to flatter you,
Imagine I have said farewell already.

[*Exeunt* LADY ANNE, TRESSEL, *and* BERKELEY.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Sirs, take up the corse.

GENTLEMEN.

Towards Chertsey, noble lord?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

No, to White-Friars;[1] there attend[2] my coming.

[*Exeunt all, except* GLOSTER.

Was ever woman in this humour[3] woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her;—but I will not keep her long.
What! I, that kill'd her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate;[4]
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of her hatred by;[5]
Having God, her conscience, and these bars[6] against me,
And I no friends to back my suit withal
But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
And yet to win her,—all the world to nothing![7]
Ha!
Hath she forgot already that brave prince,
Edward, her lord, whom I, some three months since,[8]
Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewksbury?

[1] **White-Friars:** a monastery of the Carmelite order in London. [2] **attend:** await. [3] **humour:** mood. [4] **hate:** that is, hatred of him for his supposed murder of her father-in-law. [5] **by:** at hand; i.e., the corpse of Henry VI. [6] **bars:** hindrances. [7] **all the world to nothing:** i.e., against all odds. [8] **some three months since:** the battle of Tewksbury took place on May 4, 1471.

A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman—
Framed in the prodigality of nature,[1]
Young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, right royal—[2]
The spacious world cannot again afford:[3]
And will she yet abase her eyes on me,[4]
That cropt the golden prime[5] of this sweet prince,
And made her widow to a woeful bed?
On me, whose all not equals Edward's moiety? [6]
On me, that halt and am mis-shapen[7] thus?
My dukedom to a beggarly denier,[8]
I do mistake my person all this while:
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper[9] man.
I'll be at charges[10] for a looking-glass;
And entertain[11] a score or two of tailors
To study fashions to adorn my body:
Since I am crept in favour with myself,
I will maintain it with some little cost.
But first I'll turn yon fellow in[12] his grave;
And then return lamenting to my love.—
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,[13]
That I may see my shadow as I pass. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *The palace.*

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, RIVERS,[14] *and* GREY.[15]

EARL RIVERS.

Have patience, madam: there's no doubt his majesty
Will soon recover his accustom'd health.

LORD GREY.

In that you brook it ill, it makes him worse:

[1] **Framed in the prodigality of nature:** fashioned by nature when she was in a generous mood. [2] **right royal:** royal (noble) in every way. [3] **afford:** produce. [4] **abase her eyes on me:** lower her eyes to me. [5] **cropt the golden prime:** cut short the golden (best) years of his life. [6] **whose all . . . moiety:** that is, everything that I possess does not equal Edward's share (half). [7] **halt and am mis-shapen:** lame and deformed. [8] **denier:** copper coin of small value. [9] **proper:** handsome. [10] **at charges:** i.e., a customer. [11] **entertain:** hire. [12] **in:** into. [13] **glass:** mirror. [14] **Rivers:** Earl Rivers, the Queen's brother. [15] **Grey:** Lord Richard Grey, the Queen's younger son by Sir John Grey.

Therefore, for God's sake, entertain good comfort,
And cheer his Grace with quick and merry words.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

If he were dead, what would betide of me?[1]

EARL RIVERS.

No other harm but loss of such a lord.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The loss of such a lord includes all harms.

LORD GREY.

The heavens have blest you with a goodly son,
To be your comforter when he is gone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, he is young; and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloster,
A man that loves not me nor none of you.

EARL RIVERS.

Is it concluded he shall be Protector?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

It is determined, not concluded yet:[2]
But so it must be, if the king miscarry.[3]

Enter BUCKINGHAM *and* DERBY.

LORD GREY.

Here come the lords of Buckingham and Derby.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Good time of day unto your royal Grace!

EARL OF DERBY.

God make your majesty joyful as you have been!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Countess Richmond,[4] good my Lord of Derby,
To your good prayer will scarcely say amen.[5]

[1] **betide of me**: become of me. [2] **determined, not concluded yet**: decided on, but not yet ratified. [3] **miscarry**: die. [4] **The Countess Richmond**: Margaret Beaufort, wife of Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, and widow of Edmund Tudor, whose son, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, entertains claims to the throne. [5] **say amen**: agree.

Yet, Derby, notwithstanding she's your wife,
And loves not me, be you, good lord, assured
I hate not you for her proud arrogance.[1]

EARL OF DERBY.

I do beseech you, either not believe
The envious[2] slanders of her false accusers;
Or, if she be accused on true report,
Bear with her weakness, which, I think, proceeds
From wayward [3] sickness, and no grounded [4] malice.

EARL RIVERS.

Saw you the king to-day, my Lord of Derby?

EARL OF DERBY.

But now the Duke of Buckingham and I
Are come from visiting his majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What likelihood of his amendment,[5] lords?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Madam, good hope; his Grace speaks cheerfully.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

God grant him health! Did you confer with him?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Ay, madam: he desires to make atonement[6]
Between the Duke of Gloster and your brothers,
And betwixt them and my lord chamberlain;[7]
And sent to warn[8] them to his royal presence.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Would all were well!—but that will never be:
I fear our happiness is at the height.

Enter GLOSTER, HASTINGS, *and* DORSET.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

They do me wrong, and I will not endure it:—
Who are they that complain unto the king
That I, forsooth, am stern,[9] and love them not?

[1] **arrogance:** that is, arrogant because of her aspirations to the crown for her son. [2] **envious:** malicious. [3] **wayward:** perverse. [4] **grounded:** fixed. [5] **amendment:** recovery. [6] **to make atonement:** to reconcile. [7] **lord chamberlain:** Hastings. [8] **warn:** summon. [9] **stern:** cruel; cold.

By holy Paul, they love his Grace but lightly
That fill his ears with such dissentious[1] rumours.
Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,[2]
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,[3]
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abused [4]
By silken, sly, insinuating Jacks? [5]

EARL RIVERS.

To whom in all this presence[6] speaks your Grace?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.
When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?—
Or thee?—or thee?—or any of your faction? [7]
A plague upon you all! His royal Grace—
Whom God preserve better than you would wish!—
Cannot be quiet scarce a breathing-while,[8]
But you must trouble him with lewd [9] complaints.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Brother of Gloster, you mistake the matter.
The king, of his own royal disposition,
And not provoked by any suitor else;
Aiming, belike, at your interior hatred,
That in your outward action shows itself
Against my children, brothers, and myself,
Makes him to send, that thereby he may gather
The ground [10] of your ill-will, and so remove it.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad,
That wrens[11] may prey where eagles dare not perch:

[1] **dissentious:** troublemaking. [2] **fair:** courteously. [3] **cog:** literally, cheat; wheedle; fawn. [4] **be abused:** distorted. [5] **Jacks:** knaves. [6] **presence:** assembly. [7] **faction:** partisans. [8] **breathing-while:** moment. [9] **lewd:** vile. [10] **ground:** grounds; cause. [11] **wrens:** i.e., the Woodvilles, Queen Elizabeth's family.

Since every Jack[1] became a gentleman,
There's many a gentle person[2] made a Jack.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Come, come, we know your meaning, brother Gloster;
You envy my advancement and my friends':
God grant we never may have need of you!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Meantime, God grants that we have need of you:[3]
Our brother is imprison'd by your means,[4]
Myself disgraced, and the nobility
Held in contempt; while great promotions
Are daily given to ennoble those
That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble.[5]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

By Him that raised me to this careful [6] height
From that contented hap[7] which I enjoy'd,
I never did incense his majesty
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.
My lord, you do me shameful injury,
Falsely to draw[8] me in these vile suspects.[9]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

You may deny that you were not the cause[10]
Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.

EARL RIVERS.

She may, my lord; for—

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

She may, Lord Rivers!—why, who knows not so?
She may do more, sir, than denying that:
She may help you to many fair preferments;[11]
And then deny her aiding hand therein,

[1] **Jack:** low, common fellow. [2] **gentle person:** person of gentle birth. [3] **we have need of you:** i.e., we are in trouble because of you. [4] **means:** orders; machinations. [5] **noble:** gold coin worth 6*s.*, 8*d.* [6] **careful:** full of care. [7] **contented hap:** good fortune. [8] **draw:** involve. [9] **suspects:** suspicions. [10] **You may deny . . . cause:** you cannot deny that you were the cause. [11] **preferments:** advances.

And lay those honours on your high desert.[1]
What may she not? She may,—ay, marry,[2] may she,—

EARL RIVERS.

What, marry, may she?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What, marry,[3] may she! marry with a king,
A bachelor, a handsome stripling too:
Iwis[4] your grandam[5] had a worser match.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My Lord of Gloster, I have too long borne
Your blunt[6] upbraidings and your bitter scoffs:
By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty
With those gross taunts I often have endured.
I had rather be a country servant-maid
Than a great queen, with this condition,—
To be so baited,[7] scorn'd, and stormed at:

Enter QUEEN MARGARET,[8] *behind.*

Small joy have I in being England's queen.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

And lessen'd be that small,[9] God, I beseech Him!
Thy honour, state, and seat[10] is due to me.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What! threat[11] you me with telling of the king?
Tell him, and spare not: look, what I have said
I will avouch in presence of the king:
I dare adventure to be[12] sent to th' Tower.
'Tis time to speak,—my pains[13] are quite forgot.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

Out, devil! I remember them too well:
Thou kill'dst my husband Henry in the Tower,
And Edward, my poor son, at Tewksbury.

[1] **desert:** merit. [2] **marry:** by the Virgin Mary (a mild oath). [3] **marry:** a pun on the former *marry*. [4] **Iwis:** certainly. [5] **grandam:** the Duchess of Bedford, who married Richard Woodville. [6] **blunt:** rude. [7] **baited:** harassed. [8] **Queen Margaret:** Henry VI's widow, who has been banished from England (here she appears symbolically for the downfall of the House of York). [9] **small:** small joy. [10] **seat:** throne. [11] **threat:** threaten. [12] **adventure to be:** risk being. [13] **my pains:** my labor or efforts on behalf of the king.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Ere you were queen, ay, or your husband king,
I was a pack-horse[1] in his great affairs;
A weeder-out of his proud adversaries,
A liberal rewarder of his friends:
To royalize his blood [2] I spilt mine own.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

Ay, and much better blood than his or thine.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

In all which time you and your husband Grey
Were factious[3] for the house of Lancaster;—
And, Rivers, so were you:—was not your husband
In Margaret's battle at Saint Alban's[4] slain?
Let me put in your minds, if you forget,
What you have been ere now, and what you are;
Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

A murderous villain, and so still thou art.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Poor Clarence did forsake his father,[5] Warwick;
Ay, and forswore himself,—which Jesu pardon!—

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

Which God revenge!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

To fight on Edward's party, for the crown;
And for his meed,[6] poor lord, he is mew'd up.[7]
I would to God my heart were flint, like Edward's;
Or Edward's soft and pitiful, like mine:
I am too childish-foolish[8] for this world.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave this world,

[1] **pack-horse:** beast of burden; drudge. [2] **royalize his blood:** to make him worthy of being king. [3] **factious:** actively taking sides in the quarrel. [4] **Margaret's battle at Saint Alban's:** the second Battle of St. Albans in 1461, when Margaret defeated the Yorkists. [5] **father:** father-in-law. [6] **meed:** reward. [7] **mew'd up:** shut up; imprisoned. [8] **childish-foolish:** childishly innocent.

Thou cacodemon! [1] there thy kingdom is.

EARL RIVERS.

My Lord of Gloster, in those busy days
Which here you urge[2] to prove us enemies,
We follow'd then our lord, our lawful king:
So should we you, if you should be our king.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

If I should be!—I had rather be a pedlar:
Far be it from my heart, the thought of it!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As little joy, my lord, as you suppose
You should enjoy, were you this country's king,—
As little joy may you suppose in me,
That I enjoy, being the queen thereof.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

As little joy enjoys the queen thereof;
For I am she, and altogether joyless.
I can no longer hold me patient.— [*Advancing.*
Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out
In sharing that which you have pill'd [3] from me!
Which of you trembles not that looks on me?
If not, that, I being queen, you bow like subjects,
Yet that, by you deposed, you quake like rebels?—[4]
Ah, gentle villain,[5] do not turn away!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Foul wrinkled witch, what makest thou[6] in my sight?

QUEEN MARGARET.

But repetition of what thou hast marr'd;
That will I make before I let thee go.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Wert thou not banished on pain of death?

[1] **cacodemon:** evil spirit; devil. [2] **urge:** put forward as argument. [3] **pill'd:** pillaged; robbed. [4] **If not . . . rebels:** if you do not bow to me as my subjects, then at least you tremble with fear for having deposed me. [5] **gentle villain:** nobly born rascal (*gentle* is used ironically). [6] **what makest thou:** what are you doing.

QUEEN MARGARET.

I was;
But I do find more pain in banishment
Than death can yield me here by my abode.
A husband and a son thou owest to me,—
And thou a kingdom,—all of you allegiance:
The sorrow that I have, by right is yours;
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

The curse my noble father laid on thee,
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper,[1]
And with thy scorns drew'st rivers[2] from his eyes:
And then, to dry them, gavest the duke a clout[3]
Steept in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland;—[4]
His curses, then from bitterness of soul
Denounced against thee, are all faln upon thee;
And God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

So just is God, to right the innocent.

LORD HASTINGS.

O, 'twas the foulest deed to slay that babe,[5]
And the most merciless that e'er was heard of!

EARL RIVERS.

Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

MARQUESS OF DORSET.[6]

No man but prophesied revenge for it.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Northumberland, then present, wept to see it.

QUEEN MARGARET.

What! were you snarling all before I came,
Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me?

[1] **didst crown his warlike brows with paper:** Queen Margaret is said to have placed a paper crown upon Henry VI's head, in token of her scorn, just before he was killed. [2] **rivers:** copious tears. [3] **clout:** piece of cloth. [4] **pretty Rutland:** Edmund, Earl of Rutland, third son of the Duke of York and brother of Gloucester. [5] **babe:** i.e., pretty Rutland. [6] **Marquess of Dorset:** Queen Elizabeth's older son by Sir John Grey.

Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven,
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,
Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment,
Could all but answer for that peevish brat? [1]
Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?—
Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!—
Though not by war, by surfeit[2] die your king,
As ours by murder, to make him a king!
Edward thy son, that now is Prince of Wales,
For Edward my son, that was Prince of Wales,
Die in his youth by like untimely violence!
Thyself a queen, for me that was a queen,
Outlive thy glory, like my wretched self!
Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's loss;
And see another, as I see thee now,
Deckt in thy rights, as thou art stall'd [3] in mine!
Long die thy happy days before thy death;
And, after many lengthen'd hours of grief,
Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!—
Rivers and Dorset, you were standers by,—
And so wast thou, Lord Hastings,—when my son
Was stabb'd with bloody daggers: God, I pray Him,
That none of you may live[4] his natural age,
But by some unlookt[5] accident cut off!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Have done thy charm,[6] thou hateful wither'd hag! [7]

QUEEN MARGARET.

And leave out thee? stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.

[1] **peevish brat:** silly child. [2] **surfeit:** overindulgence. [3] **stall'd:** installed; enthroned. [4] **live:** live to. [5] **unlookt:** unlooked for; unforeseen. [6] **charm:** witch's curses. [7] **hag:** witch.

If heaven have any grievous plague in store
Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,
O, let them[1] keep it till thy sins be ripe,
And then hurl down their indignation
On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace!
The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
Thou elvish-markt,[2] abortive, rooting hog![3]
Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity
The slave[4] of nature and the son of hell!
Thou slander of thy mother's heavy womb!
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins!
Thou rag[5] of honour! thou detested—

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Margaret.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Richard!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Ha!

QUEEN MARGARET.

I call thee not.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I cry thee mercy,[6] then; for did I think
That thou hadst call'd me all these bitter names.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Why, so I did; but lookt for[7] no reply.
O, let me make the period to my curse!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

'Tis done by me, and ends in—Margaret.

[1] **them:** heaven. [2] **elvish-markt:** marked by the elves, or wicked fairies, at birth. [3] **hog:** an allusion to Richard's badge of the boar. [4] **slave:** contemptible creature. [5] **rag:** a term of contempt. [6] **I cry thee mercy:** I beg your pardon. [7] **lookt for:** expected.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Poor painted queen, vain flourish[1] of my fortune!
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled [2] spider,
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?
Fool, fool! thou whett'st a knife to kill thyself.
The day will come that thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse that poisonous bunch-backt[3] toad.

LORD HASTINGS.

False-boding[4] woman, end thy frantic curse,
Lest to thy harm thou move our patience.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Foul shame upon you! you have all moved mine.

EARL RIVERS.

Were you well served, you would be taught your duty.

QUEEN MARGARET.

To serve me well, you all should do me duty,[5]
Teach me to be your queen, and you my subjects:
O, serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty!

MARQUESS OF DORSET.

Dispute not with her,—she is lunatic.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Peace, master marquess, you are malapert:[6]
Your fire-new stamp[7] of honour is scarce current:[8]
O, that your young nobility could judge
What 'twere to lose it, and be miserable!
They that stand high have many blasts to shake them;
And if they fall, they dash themselves to pieces.

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[1] **vain flourish:** vain, or empty, show; a queen merely in name. [2] **bottled:** either swollen with venom or shaped like a bottle. [3] **bunch-backt:** hunchbacked. [4] **False-boding:** giving vent to false prophecies of doom. [5] **do me duty:** make obeisance to me. [6] **malapert:** impudent. [7] **fire-new stamp:** newly minted. [8] **current:** accepted as coinage.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Good counsel, marry:—learn it, learn it, marquess.

MARQUESS OF DORSET.

It touches[1] you, my lord, as much as me.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Ay, and much more: but I was born so high,
Our aery[2] buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.[3]

QUEEN MARGARET.

And turns the sun to shade;—alas! alas!—
Witness my son, now in the shade of death;
Whose bright out-shining beams thy cloudy wrath
Hath in eternal darkness folded up.
Your aery buildeth in our aery's nest:—
O God, that seest it, do not suffer[4] it;
As it was won with blood, lost be it so! [5]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Peace, peace, for shame, if not for charity.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Urge neither charity nor shame to me:
Uncharitably with me have you dealt,
And shamefully by you my hopes are butcher'd.
My charity is outrage, life my shame,—
And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Have done, have done.

QUEEN MARGARET.

O princely Buckingham, I'll kiss thy hand,
In sign of league and amity with thee:
Now fair befall thee[6] and thy noble house!
Thy garments are not spotted with our blood,

[1] **touches:** affects; concerns. [2] **aery:** eagle's nest; here, the eagle brood of the House of York. [3] **scorns the sun:** i.e., because they have the sight of eagles. [4] **suffer:** allow. [5] **As it was . . . so:** as it was won by bloodshed, so let it be lost by bloodshed. [6] **fair befall thee:** may good fortune shine on you.

Nor thou within the compass[1] of my curse.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Nor no one here; for curses never pass
The lips of those that breathe them in the air.

QUEEN MARGARET.

I'll not believe but they ascend the sky,[2]
And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace.
O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!
Look, when he fawns he bites; and when he bites,
His venom tooth will rankle[3] to the death:
Have not to do with him, beware of him;
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What doth she say, my Lord of Buckingham?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Nothing that I respect,[4] my gracious lord.

QUEEN MARGARET.

What, dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel?
And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?
O, but remember this another day,
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
And say, poor Margaret was a prophetess!—
Live each of you the subjects to his hate,
And he to yours, and all of you to God's! [*Exit.*

LORD HASTINGS.

My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses.

EARL RIVERS.

And so doth mine: I muse[5] why she's at liberty.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I cannot blame her: by God's holy mother,
She hath had too much wrong; and I repent
My part thereof that I have done to her.

[1] **compass:** reach.
[2] **I'll not . . . sky:** I shall not believe that they fail to reach Heaven.
[3] **rankle:** cause to fester.
[4] **respect:** take notice of.
[5] **muse:** wonder.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I never did her any, to my knowledge.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Yet you have all the vantage of her wrong.[1]
I was too hot[2] to do somebody good
That is too cold in thinking of it now.[3]
Marry, as for Clarence, he is well repaid;
He is frankt up to fatting[4] for his pains;—
God pardon them that are the cause of it!

EARL RIVERS.

A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe[5] to us.

DUKE OF GLOSTER [*aside*].

So do I ever, being well advised;
For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself.

Enter CATESBY.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Madam, his majesty doth call for you,—
And for your Grace,—and you, my noble lords.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Catesby, I come.—Lords, will you go with me?

EARL RIVERS.

We wait upon your Grace. [*Exeunt all except* GLOSTER.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.[6]
The secret mischiefs that I set abroach[7]
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
Clarence,—whom I, indeed, have laid in darkness,—
I do beweep to many simple gulls;[8]
Namely, to Hastings, Derby, Buckingham;
And say it is the queen and her allies
That stir the king against the duke my brother.

[1] **vantage of her wrong:** benefits resulting from the wrong done her. [2] **too hot:** too quick; too eager. [3] **That is too cold in thinking of it now:** that is, King Edward does not seem to appreciate his efforts now. [4] **frankt up to fatting:** penned up for fattening (as hogs are); a frank is a pigsty. [5] **scathe:** injury; harm. [6] **and first begin to brawl:** and I am the first to start complaining (of the wrong). [7] **set abroach:** set afoot. [8] **I do beweep to many simple gulls:** I weep about to many unseeing fools (dupes).

Now, they believe it; and withal [1] whet me[2]
To be revenged on Rivers, Vaughan, Grey:
But then I sigh; and, with a piece of Scripture,
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With old odd ends[3] stoln out of holy writ;
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.—
But, soft! [4] here come my executioners.

Enter two MURDERERS.

How now, my hardy, stout-resolved [5] mates!
Are you now going to dispatch this thing?

FIRST MURDERER.

We are, my lord; and come to have the warrant,
That we may be admitted where he is.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Well thought upon;—I have it here about me:
[*Gives the warrant.*
When you have done, repair to Crosby-place.
But, sirs, be sudden[6] in the execution,
Withal obdurate,[7] do not hear him plead;
For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps
May move your hearts to pity, if you mark him.[8]

FIRST MURDERER.

Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate;[9]
Talkers are no good doers: be assured
We go to use our hands, and not our tongues.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Your eyes drop millstones, when fools' eyes drop tears:
I like you, lads;—about your business straight;[10]
Go, go, dispatch.

FIRST MURDERER.

We will, my noble lord. [*Exeunt.*

[1] **withal:** moreover. [2] **whet me:** urge me. [3] **odd ends:** odds and ends. [4] **soft:** easy now. [5] **stout-resolved:** bravely resolute. [6] **sudden:** swift; unexpected. [7] **obdurate:** hardhearted. [8] **mark him:** listen to him. [9] **prate:** prattle. [10] **straight:** at once.

SCENE IV.

The Tower.

Enter CLARENCE *and* BRAKENBURY.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

Why looks your Grace so heavily[1] to-day?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

O, I have past[2] a miserable night,
So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights,
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days,—
So full of dismal terror was the time!

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

What was your dream, my lord? I pray you, tell me.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Methought that I had broken from the Tower,
And was embarkt to cross to Burgundy;[3]
And, in my company, my brother Gloster;
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches:[4] thence we lookt toward England,
And cited up[5] a thousand heavy times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster,
That had befaln us. As we paced along
Upon the giddy[6] footing of the hatches,
Methought that Gloster stumbled; and, in falling,
Struck me, that thought to stay him,[7] overboard
Into the tumbing billows of the main.[8]
Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!

[1] **heavily:** sad. [2] **past:** passed. [3] **Burgundy:** the Low Countries; Clarence's sister, Margaret, married Charles, Duke of Burgundy. [4] **hatches:** makeshift decks. [5] **cited up:** recalled. [6] **giddy:** uncertain. [7] **stay him:** prevent him from falling. [8] **the main:** the ocean.

What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wracks;[1]
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable[2] stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatt'red in the bottom of the sea:
Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,
As 'twere[3] in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,
That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mockt the dead bones that lay scatt'red by.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

Had you such leisure[4] in the time of death
To gaze upon the secrets of the deep?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Methought I had; and often did I strive
To yield the ghost:[5] but still the envious[6] flood
Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth
To seek the empty, vast, and wandering air;
But smother'd it within my panting bulk,
Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

Awaked you not with this sore agony?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

No, no, my dream was lengthen'd after life;
O, then began the tempest to my soul!
I past, methought, the melancholy flood,[7]
With that grim ferryman[8] which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul,
Was my great father-in-law,[9] renowned Warwick;
Who cried aloud, 'What scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'

[1] **wracks:** wrecks. [2] **Inestimable:** invaluable; beyond estimation. [3] **As 'twere:** as if it were. [4] **such leisure:** so much time. [5] **To yield the ghost:** to give up the ghost; to die. [6] **envious:** malicious. [7] **the melancholy flood:** the River Styx. [8] **grim ferryman:** Charon, who ferried souls across the river to the underworld. [9] **father-in-law:** Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, called "the kingmaker."

And so he vanisht: then came wandering by
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair[1]
Dabbled in blood; and he shriekt out aloud,
'Clarence is come; false, fleeting,[2] perjured Clarence,
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewksbury:
Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!'
With that, methought, a legion of foul fiends
Environ'd me,[3] and howled in mine ears
Such hideous cries, that, with the very noise,
I trembling waked, and, for a season after,
Could not believe but that I was in hell,—
Such terrible impression made my dream.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

No marvel, lord, though it affrighted you:[4]
I am afraid, methinks, to hear you tell it.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

O Brakenbury, I have done those things,
That now give evidence against my soul,
For Edward's sake; and see how he requites[5] me!
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease Thee,
But Thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds,
Yet execute Thy wrath in me alone;
O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children![6]
I pray thee, gentle keeper, stay by me;
My soul is heavy, and I fain would [7] sleep.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

I will, my lord: God give your Grace good rest!—

[CLARENCE *sleeps*

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning, and the noontide night.

[1] **A shadow like an angel, with bright hair:** an allusion to Edward, Prince of Wales, Henry VI's murdered son. [2] **fleeting:** changeable; fickle. [3] **Environ'd me:** surrounded me. [4] **No marvel . . . you:** it *is* no wonder you were frightened. [5] **requites:** rewards. [6] **my guiltless wife and my poor children:** Richard was married to the older daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and his children were Edward, later Earl of Warwick, and Margaret Plantagenet, later Countess of Salisbury. [7] **fain would:** would like to.

Princes have but their titles for their glories,
An outward honour for an inward toil;
And, for unfelt imaginations,[1]
They often feel [2] a world of restless cares:
So that, betwixt their titles and low names,
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

Enter the two MURDERERS.

FIRST MURDERER.

Ho! who's here?

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

What wouldst thou, fellow? and how camest thou hither?

FIRST MURDERER.

I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

What, so brief?

SECOND MURDERER.

'Tis better, sir, than to be tedious.—Let him see our commission;[3] and talk no more. [BRAKENBURY *reads it.*

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

I am, in this, commanded to deliver
The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands:—
I will not reason what is meant hereby,
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.[4]
Here are the keys;—there sits the duke asleep:
I'll to the king; and signify to him
That thus I have resign'd to you my charge.

FIRST MURDERER.

You may, sir; 'tis a point[5] of wisdom: fare you well.

[*Exit* BRAKENBURY.

[1] **unfelt imaginations:** glories dreamed of but not experienced.
[2] **feel:** endure.
[3] **commission:** warrant; written instructions.
[4] **meaning:** purpose.
[5] **point:** piece.

SECOND MURDERER.

What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

FIRST MURDERER.

No; he'll say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes.

SECOND MURDERER.

When he wakes! why, fool, he shall never wake till the judgement-day.

FIRST MURDERER.

Why, then he'll say we stabb'd him sleeping.

SECOND MURDERER.

The urging[1] of that word 'judgement' hath bred a kind of remorse in me.

FIRST MURDERER.

What, art thou afraid?

SECOND MURDERER.

Not to kill him, having a warrant for it; but to be damn'd for killing him, from the which no warrant can defend me.

FIRST MURDERER.

I thought thou hadst been resolute.

SECOND MURDERER.

So I am, to let him live.

FIRST MURDERER.

I'll back[2] to the Duke of Gloster, and tell him so.

SECOND MURDERER.

I pray thee, stay a while: I hope my holy humour[3] will change; 'twas wont to hold me but while one tells twenty.[4]

FIRST MURDERER.

How dost thou feel thyself now?

SECOND MURDERER.

Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

[1] **urging:** *mention.*
[2] **I'll back:** I'll go back.
[3] **holy humour:** righteous mood.
[4] **'twas wont . . . twenty:** that is, this mood usually lasts only for the time it takes to count to twenty.

FIRST MURDERER.

Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

SECOND MURDERER.

Zounds,[1] he dies: I had forgot the reward.

FIRST MURDERER.

Where is thy conscience now?

SECOND MURDERER.

In the Duke of Gloster's purse.

FIRST MURDERER.

So, when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

SECOND MURDERER.

Let it go; there's few or none will entertain it.[2]

FIRST MURDERER.

How if it come to thee again?

SECOND MURDERER.

I'll not meddle with it: it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it checks[3] him; he cannot lie with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him: it is a blushing shame-faced spirit that mutinies[4] in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold, that by chance I found; it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turn'd out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing; and every man that means to live well[5] endeavours to trust to himself and to live without it.

FIRST MURDERER.

Zounds, it is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the duke.

SECOND MURDERER.

Take the devil in thy mind, and believe him not: he would insinuate with thee[6] but to make thee sigh.

[1] **Zounds:** by God's wounds (a mild curse).
[2] **it:** i.e., a conscience.
[3] **checks:** rebukes.
[4] **mutinies:** wars.
[5] **live well:** enjoy life.
[6] **insinuate with thee:** worm his way into your favor.

FIRST MURDERER.

Tut, I am strong-framed, he cannot prevail with me, I warrant[1] thee.

SECOND MURDERER.

Spoke like a tall[2] fellow that respects his reputation. Come, shall we to this gear?[3]

FIRST MURDERER.

Take him over the costard[4] with the hilts[5] of thy sword, and then we will chop[6] him in the malmsey-butt[7] in the next room.

SECOND MURDERER.

O excellent device! and[8] make a sop[9] of him.

FIRST MURDERER.

Hark! he stirs: shall I strike?

SECOND MURDERER.

No, first let's reason[10] with him.

DUKE OF CLARENCE [*waking*].

Where art thou, keeper? give me a cup of wine.

FIRST MURDERER.

You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

In God's name, what art thou?

FIRST MURDERER.

A man, as you are.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

But not, as I am, royal.

FIRST MURDERER.

Nor you, as we are, loyal.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.[11]

[1] **warrant:** assure. [2] **tall:** fine; stout. [3] **gear:** job—murder. [4] **Take him over the costard:** strike him on the head; literally, *costard* is an apple. [5] **hilts:** hilt. [6] **chop:** clap. [7] **malmsey-butt:** barrel of Greek wine. [8] **device:** plan. [9] **sop:** a piece of cake or bread dunked in wine. [10] **reason:** talk. [11] **thy looks are humble:** that is, you look like men of low birth.

FIRST MURDERER.

My voice is now the king's, my looks mine own.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

How darkly[1] and how deadly[2] dost thou speak!
Your eyes do menace me: why look you pale?
Who sent you hither? Wherefore[3] do you come?

BOTH MURDERERS.

To, to, to—

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

To murder me?

BOTH MURDERERS.

Ay, ay.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,
And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.
Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

FIRST MURDERER.

Offended us you have not, but the king.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

I shall be reconciled to him again.

SECOND MURDERER.

Never, my lord; therefore prepare to die.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Are you call'd forth from out a world of men
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?
Where are the evidence that do accuse me?
What lawful quest[4] have given their verdict up
Unto the frowning judge? or who pronounced
The bitter sentence of poor Clarence' death?
Before I be convict[5] by course of law,
To threaten me with death is most unlawful.

[1] **darkly**: gloomily.
[2] **deadly**: in a manner resembling death.
[3] **Wherefore**: why.
[4] **quest**: inquest.
[5] **convict**: convicted.

I charge you, as you hope to have redemption
By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins,
That you depart, and lay no hands on me:
The deed you undertake is damnable.

FIRST MURDERER.

What we will do, we do upon command.

SECOND MURDERER.

And he that hath commanded is the king.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Erroneous[1] vassal! the great King of kings
Hath in the tables of His law[2] commanded
That thou shalt do no murder: will you, then,
Spurn at His edict, and fulfil a man's?
Take heed; for He holds vengeance in His hand,[3]
To hurl upon their heads that break His law.

SECOND MURDERER.

And that same vengeance doth He hurl on thee,
For false forswearing, and for murder too:
Thou didst receive the sacrament[4] to fight
In quarrel of the house of Lancester.

FIRST MURDERER.

And, like a traitor to the name of God,
Didst break that vow; and with thy treacherous blade
Unripp'dst the bowels of thy sovereign's son.

SECOND MURDERER.

Whom thou wert sworn to cherish and defend.

FIRST MURDERER.

How canst thou urge God's dreadful law to us,
When thou hast broke it in so dear[5] degree?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?
For Edward, for my brother, for his sake:
Why, sirs,

[1] **Erroneous:** straying (from the fold).
[2] **tables of His law:** *see* Exodus 32:15.
[3] **He holds vengeance in His hand:** *see* Deut. 32:35.
[4] **receive the sacrament:** i.e., take an oath.
[5] **dear:** great.

He sends ye not to murder me for this;
For in this sin he is as deep as I.
If God will be revenged for this deed,
O, know you yet, He doth it publicly:
Take not the quarrel from His powerful arm;
He needs no indirect[1] nor lawless course
To cut off those that have offended Him.

FIRST MURDERER.

Who made thee, then, a bloody minister,[2]
When gallant-springing[3] brave Plantagenet,
That princely novice,[4] was struck dead by thee?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

My brother's love, the devil, and my rage.

FIRST MURDERER.

Thy brother's love, our duty, and thy fault,
Provoke us hither now to slaughter thee.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

O, if you do love my brother, hate not me;
I am his brother, and I love him well.
If you be hired for meed [5] go back again,
And I will send you to my brother Gloster,
Who shall reward you better for my life
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

SECOND MURDERER.

You are deceived, your brother Gloster hates you.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear:
Go you to him from me.

BOTH MURDERERS.

Ay, so we will.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Tell him, when that[6] our princely father York
Blest his three sons with his victorious arm,

[1] **indirect:** devious; underhand.
[2] **bloody minister:** agent of death.
[3] **gallant-springing:** a boy of gallantry in the springtime of life.
[4] **princely novice:** new to princehood.
[5] **meed:** reward.
[6] **when that:** that when.

And charged us from his soul to love each other,
He little thought of this divided friendship:
Bid Gloster think of this, and he will weep.

FIRST MURDERER.

Ay, millstones; as he lesson'd us[1] to weep.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

O, do not slander him, for he is kind.[2]

FIRST MURDERER.

Right.
As snow in harvest.[3]—Thou deceivest thyself:
'Tis he that sent us hither now to slaughter thee.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

It cannot be; for when I parted with him,
He hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,
That he would labour[4] my delivery.

FIRST MURDERER.

Why, so he doth, now he delivers thee
From this earth's thraldom to the joys of heaven.

SECOND MURDERER.

Make peace with God, for you must die, my lord.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Hast thou that holy feeling in thy soul,
To counsel me to make my peace with God,
And art thou yet to thy own soul so blind,
That thou wilt war with God by murdering me?—
Ah, sirs, consider, he that set you on
To do this deed will hate you for the deed.

SECOND MURDERER.

What shall we do?

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Relent, and save your souls.
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,

[1] lesson'd us: taught us.
[2] kind: natural in his brotherly love.
[3] As snow in harvest: as natural (kind) as snow in autumn, when the fields are being harvested.
[4] labour: labor for.

Being pent[1] from liberty, as I am now,
If two such murderers as yourselves came to you,
Would not[2] entreat for life? As you would beg,
Were you in my distress—

FIRST MURDERER.

Relent! 'tis cowardly and womanish.

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.
My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks;
O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,
Come thou on my side, and entreat for me:
A begging prince what beggar pities not?

SECOND MURDERER.

Look behind you, my lord.

FIRST MURDERER.

Take that, and that [*stabs him*]: if all this will not do,
I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within.

[*Exit, with the body.*

SECOND MURDERER.

A bloody deed, and desperately dispatcht![3]
How fain, like Pilate,[4] would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous guilty murder done!

Enter FIRST MURDERER.

FIRST MURDERER.

How now! what mean'st thou, that thou help'st me not?
By heaven, the duke shall know how slack[5] thou art!

SECOND MURDERER.

I would he knew that I had saved his brother!
Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say;
For I repent me that the duke is slain. [*Exit.*

[1] **pent:** shut up.
[2] **Would not:** would you not.
[3] **desperately dispatcht:** executed with no thought of the consequences.
[4] **like Pilate:** *see* Matthew 27:24.
[5] **slack:** slow; vacillating.

FIRST MURDERER.

So do not I: go, coward as thou art.—
Well, I'll go hide the body in some hole,
Till that the duke give order for his burial:
And when I have my meed, I will away;
For this will out,[1] and then I must not stay. *[Exit.*

[1] this will out: murder will out.

RICHARD THE THIRD

ACT 2

ACT II

KING EDWARD presides at court as ceremonious pledges of mutual amity are exchanged by the Queen, her kindred, Hastings, Buckingham, and Richard. Richard's claims of kindness are characteristically audacious (" 'Tis death to me to be at enmity"). When Elizabeth requests that Edward extend his benevolence to Clarence, Richard dramatically reveals that Clarence is dead. The Earl of Derby then enters hastily to plead for the King's mercy on behalf of one of his servants who has slain a man. Edward grants Derby's request, then bitterly laments his own treatment of Clarence and chides those present for their neglect in advising him.

Later, the Duchess of York is being questioned by Clarence's young son and daughter about her ill-concealed grief, and is forced to reveal that their father is dead. The children have believed Richard's suggestion that King Edward is to blame for their father's fate, but the Duchess sadly protests Richard's duplicity. Queen Elizabeth enters bewailing King Edward's death, and then engages in a ritual of lamentation with the Duchess and Clarence's children. Dorset and Rivers enter and seek to comfort Elizabeth, advising that she send for her young son, Edward Prince of Wales, in order that he may be crowned at once. Richard and Buckingham then arrive, offer brief condolences, and propose that a small party be sent to Ludlow to fetch the Prince. They later exchange remarks which indicate their plans to separate "the Queen's proud kindred" from the Prince on the journey back to London.

Later, on a London street, three citizens meet, comment on the King's death, and express their fears for the future: "When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?"

At the palace, the Duchess of York, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's son, Richard Duke of York (younger brother of Edward, Prince of Wales), are speaking with the Archbishop of York, chiefly about Richard, Duke of Gloucester's childhood, when a messenger arrives with news that Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan have been taken prisoner by Richard and Buckingham. Elizabeth foresees "as in a map, the end of all" for her house. The Archbishop conducts Elizabeth and her son to sanctuary.

ACT II. Scene I.

London. The palace.

Enter the KING, *sick, the* QUEEN, DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, GREY, *and others.*

KING EDWARD.

Why, so: now have I done a good day's work:
You peers, continue this united league:
I every day expect an embassage[1]
From my Redeemer[2] to redeem me hence;
And now in peace my soul shall part[3] to heaven,
Since I have made my friends at peace on earth.
Rivers and Hastings, take each other's hand;
Dissemble not[4] your hatred, swear your love.

EARL RIVERS.

By heaven, my soul is purged [5] from grudging hate;
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.

LORD HASTINGS.

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like! [6]

KING EDWARD.

Take heed you dally not[7] before your king;
Lest He that is the supreme King of kings,
Confound [8] your hidden falsehood, and award
Either of you to be the other's end.

[1] **embassage:** message. [2] **my Redeemer:** God. [3] **part:** depart. [4] **Dissemble not:** do not disguise or gloss over. [5] **purged:** purified. [6] **So thrive . . . like:** so may I succeed in life as I keep my vow (*to love Rivers*). [7] ***you dally not:*** *you do not* **trifle.** [8] **Confound:** defeat.

LORD HASTINGS.

So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!

EARL RIVERS.

And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!

KING EDWARD.

Madam, yourself are not exempt in this,—
Nor you, son Dorset,—Buckingham, nor you;—
You have been factious[1] one against the other.
Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;
And what you do, do it unfeignedly.[2]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

There, Hastings; I will never more remember
Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!

KING EDWARD.

Dorset, embrace him;—Hastings, love lord marquess.

MARQUESS OF DORSET.

This interchange of love, I here protest,[3]
Upon my part shall be inviolable.[4]

LORD HASTINGS.

And so swear I. [*They embrace.*

KING EDWARD.

Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league
With thy embracements to my wife's allies,
And make me happy in your unity.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM [*to the* QUEEN].

Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate
Upon your Grace, but with all duteous love
Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love!
When I have most need to employ a friend,
And most assured that he is a friend,
Deep, hollow,[5] treacherous, and full of guile,

[1] **factious:** plotting; taking sides.
[2] **unfeignedly:** unreservedly; with your whole heart.
[3] **protest:** declare.
[4] **inviolable:** held sacred.
[5] **hollow:** insincere.

Be he unto me!—this do I beg of God,
When I am cold in zeal to you or yours. [*They embrace.*

KING EDWARD.

A pleasing cordial,[1] princely Buckingham,
Is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth[2] now our brother Gloster here,
To make the perfect period [3] of this peace.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

And, in good time, here comes the noble duke.

Enter GLOSTER.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Good morrow to my sovereign king and queen;
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

KING EDWARD.

Happy, indeed, as we have spent the day.
Brother, we have done deeds of charity;
Made peace of enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling[4] wrong-incensed [5] peers.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

A blessed labour, my most sovereign liege.
Among this princely heap, if any here,
By false intelligence[6] or wrong surmise,
Hold me a foe;
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne[7]
By any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:
'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.
First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,
Which I will purchase with my duteous service;
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,

[1] **cordial:** restorative. [2] **wanteth:** lacks; is wanting. [3] **period:** conclusion. [4] **swelling:** swollen with pride. [5] **wrong-incensed:** wrongfully hating. [6] **intelligence:** information. [7] **is hardly borne:** has been taken resentfully.

If ever any grudge were lodged between us;
Of you, Lord Rivers, and, Lord Grey, of you,
That all without desert[1] have frown'd on me;—
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen;—indeed, of all.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds[2]
More than the infant that is born to-night:
I thank my God for my humility.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

A holiday shall this be kept hereafter:
I would to God all strifes were well compounded.[3]
My sovereign lord, I do beseech your highness
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Why, madam, have I offer'd love for this,
To be so so flouted in this royal presence?
Who knows not that the gentle duke is dead?

[They all start.

You do him injury to scorn his corse.

EARL RIVERS.

Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

All-seeing heaven, what a world is this!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

MARQUESS OF DORSET.

Ay, my good lord; and no one in this presence
But his red[4] colour hath forsook his cheeks.

KING EDWARD.

Is Clarence dead? the order was reversed.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

But he, poor soul, by your order first died,
And that a winged Mercury[5] did bear;

[1] **without desert:** without any cause.
[2] **at odds:** at variance.
[3] **compounded:** made up.
[4] **red:** healthy.
[5] **winged Mercury:** a fast messenger; Mercury, messenger of the gods, had wings on his sandals.

Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
That came too lag[1] to see him buried.
God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,
Nearer in bloody thoughts,[2] but not in blood,[3]
Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,
And yet go current from suspicion! [4]

Enter DERBY.

EARL OF DERBY.

A boon, my sovereign, for my service done!

KING EDWARD.

I prithee, peace: my soul is full of sorrow.

EARL OF DERBY.

I will not rise, unless your highness hear me.

KING EDWARD.

Then say at once what is it thou request'st.

EARL OF DERBY.

The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life;[5]
Who slew to-day a riotous[6] gentleman
Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

KING EDWARD.

Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death,
And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave?
My brother kill'd no man,—his fault was thought,
And yet his punishment was bitter death.
Who sued to me for him? who, in my rage,
Kneel'd at my feet, and bade me be advised? [7]
Who spoke of brotherhood? who spoke of love?
Who told me how the poor soul did forsake
The mighty Warwick, and did fight for me?
Who told me, in the field at Tewksbury,
When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,
And said, 'Dear brother, live, and be a king'?

[1] **too lag:** too late. [2] **in bloody thoughts:** in treasonable plots. [3] **in blood:** in kinship. [4] **go current from suspicion:** move about freely without being suspected of disloyalty. [5] **The forfeit . . . life:** that is, that his servant, even though a murderer, be allowed to live. [6] **riotous:** loose-living; drunken. [7] **be advised:** to think it over; to give it further consideration.

Who told me, when we both lay in the field
Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me[1]
Even in his garments, and did give himself,
All thin and naked, to the numb-cold night?
All this from my remembrance brutish wrath
Sinfully pluckt, and not a man of you
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.
But when your carters or your waiting-vassals[2]
Have done a drunken slaughter,[3] and defaced
The precious image of our dear Redeemer,
You straight[4] are on your knees for pardon, pardon;
And I, unjustly too, must grant it you:
But for my brother not a man would speak,
Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself
For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all
Have been beholding to him in his life;
Yet none of you would once plead for his life.—
O God, I fear Thy justice will take hold
On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!—
Come, Hastings, help me to my closet.[5]—Ah,
Poor Clarence! [*Exeunt some with* KING *and* QUEEN.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

This is the fruit of rashness!—Markt you not
How that the guilty kindred of the queen
Lookt pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?
O, they did urge it still[6] unto the king!
God will revenge it.—Come, lords, will you go
To comfort Edward with our company?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

We wait upon[7] your Grace. [*Exeunt.*

[1] **lap me:** wrap me. [2] **waiting-vassals:** serving men. [3] **Have done a drunken slaughter:** have committed a murder while under the influence of drink. [4] **straight:** immediately. [5] **closet:** private chamber. [6] **still:** continually. [7] **wait upon:** attend.

SCENE II.

The palace.

Enter the old DUCHESS OF YORK, *with the two* CHILDREN *of* CLARENCE.

SON.[1]
Good grandam,[2] tell us, is our father dead?
DUCHESS OF YORK.
No, boy.
DAUGHTER.[3]
Why do you weep so oft, and beat your breast,
And cry, 'O Clarence, my unhappy son!'
SON.
Why do you look on us, and shake your head,
And call us orphans, wretches, castaways,
If that[4] our noble father be alive?
DUCHESS OF YORK.
My pretty cousins,[5] you mistake me both;
I do lament the sickness of the king,
As loth to lose him, not your father's death;
It were[6] lost sorrow to wail [7] one that's lost.
SON.
Then, grandam, you conclude that he is dead.
The king my uncle is to blame for this:
God will revenge it; Whom I will importune
With daily prayers all to that effect.
DAUGHTER.
And so will I.
DUCHESS OF YORK.
Peace, children, peace! the king doth love you well:
Incapable and shallow[8] innocents,
You cannot guess who caused your father's death.

[1] **Son:** Edward, Clarence's son. [2] **grandam:** grandmother. [3] **Daughter:** Margaret Plantagenet, Clarence's daughter. [4] **If that:** if. [5] **cousins:** a term of address used of almost any blood relationship. [6] **were:** would be. [7] **wail:** weep for. [8] **Incapable and shallow:** unable to understand such weighty matters.

SON.

Grandam, we can; for my good uncle Gloster
Told me, the king, provoked by the queen,
Devised impeachments[1] to imprison him:
And when my uncle told me so, he wept,
And pitied me, and kindly kist my cheek;
Bade me rely on him as on my father,
And he would love me dearly as his child.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,[2]
And with a virtuous vizor[3] hide deep vice!
He is my son; ay, and therein my shame;
Yet from my dugs[4] he drew not this deceit.

SON.

Think you my uncle did dissemble,[5] grandam?

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Ay, boy.

SON.

I cannot think it.—Hark! what noise is this?

Enter the QUEEN, *with her hair about her ears;*
RIVERS *and* DORSET *after her.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,[6]
To chide[7] my fortune, and torment myself?
I'll join with black despair against my soul,
And to myself become an enemy.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

What means this scene of rude[8] impatience?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

To make an act of tragic violence:—
Edward, my lord, thy son, our king, is dead!
Why grow the branches when the root is gone?
Why wither not the leaves that want[9] their sap?

[1] **impeachments:** accusations. [2] **should steal such gentle shapes:** should borrow such tender guises. [3] **vizor:** mask. [4] **dugs:** breasts. [5] **did dissemble:** acted deceitfully. [6] **hinder me to wail and weep:** stop me from wailing and weeping. [7] **chide:** berate. [8] **rude:** unrestrained. [9] **want:** lack.

If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king's,
Or, like obedient subjects, follow him
To his new kingdom of ne'er-changing night.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow
As I had title in thy noble husband![1]
I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And lived by looking on his images:[2]
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance[3]
Are crackt in pieces by malignant death,
And I for comfort have but one false glass,[4]
That grieves me when I see my shame in him.
Thou art a widow; yet thou art a mother,
And hast the comfort of thy children left thee:
But death hath snatcht my husband from mine arms,
And pluckt two crutches from my feeble hands,—
Clarence and Edward. O, what cause have I—
Thine being but a moiety[5] of my grief—
To over-go[6] thy plaints and drown thy cries!

SON.

Ah, aunt, you wept not for our father's death!
How can we aid you with our kindred tears?

DAUGHTER.

Our fatherless distress was left unmoan'd;
Your widow-dolour[7] likewise be unwept!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Give me no help in lamentation;[8]
I am not barren to bring forth complaints:
All springs reduce[9] their currents to mine eyes,
That I, being govern'd by the watery moon,[10]
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world!

[1] As . . . husband: as I had claim in your husband (my son). [2] images: i.e., his children. [3] two mirrors . . . semblance: two sons reflecting his noble appearance. [4] one false glass: that is, the deformed Richard [5] moiety: small share. [6] over-go: exceed. [7] widow-dolour: grief of a widow. [8] Give . . . lamentation: i.e., I need no one's help in grieving. [9] reduce: bring back. [10] watery moon: because the moon affected the tides, it was also supposed to bring rain.

Ah for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

CHILDREN.

Ah for our father, for our dear lord Clarence!

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What stay[1] had I but Edward? and he's gone.

CHILDREN.

What stay had we but Clarence? and he's gone.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

What stays had I but they; and they are gone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Was never widow had so dear[2] a loss!

CHILDREN.

Were never orphans had so dear a loss!

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Was never mother had so dear a loss!
Alas, I am the mother of these griefs!
Their woes are parcell'd,[3] mine are general.
She for an Edward weeps, and so do I;
I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she:
These babes for Clarence weep, and so do I;
I for an Edward weep, so do not they:—
Alas, you three, on me, threefold distrest,
Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,
And I will pamper it with lamentations.

MARQUESS OF DORSET.[4]

Comfort, dear mother: God is much displeased
That you take with unthankfulness His doing:
In common worldly things 'tis call'd ungrateful
With dull unwillingness to repay a debt
Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;

[1] **stay:** comfort; support.
[2] **dear:** insupportable; dire.
[3] **parcell'd:** individual—that is, they each grieve for one person.
[4] **Marquess of Dorsett:** Queen Elizabeth's older son by her first marriage.

Much more to be thus opposite with[1] heaven,
For it requires the royal debt it lent you.[2]

EARL RIVERS.

Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him;
Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives:
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,
And plant your joys in living Edward's throne.

Enter GLOSTER, BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, RATCLIFF, *and others.*

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Sister, have comfort: all of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star;
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.—
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;[3]
I did not see your Grace:—humbly on my knee
I crave your blessing.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

God bless thee; and put meekness in thy breast,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Amen;—[*aside*] and make me die a good old man!
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing:[4]
I marvel that her Grace did leave it out.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

You cloudy[5] princes and heart-sorrowing peers,
That bear this mutual heavy load of moan,
Now cheer each other in each other's love:
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,
We are to reap the harvest of his son.
The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts,[6]
But lately splinter'd, knit and join'd together,

[1] **opposite with:** antagonistic to; in opposition to. [2] **it requires . . . you:** the expression of a common belief in Shakespeare's day—that life is lent by God and must be returned to God upon demand. [3] **cry you mercy:** beg your pardon. [4] **That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing:** that is always the final part of a mother's blessing. [5] **cloudy:** melancholy. [6] **The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts:** their hatred is compared with a boil, swollen with pus until it breaks, or bursts.

Must gently be preserved, cherisht, and kept:
Me seemeth good,[1] that, with some little train,[2]
Forthwith from Ludlow[3] the young prince be fet[4]
Hither to London, to be crown'd our king.

EARL RIVERS.

Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Marry, my lord, lest, by a multitude,
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out;
Which would be so much the more dangerous,
By how much the estate[5] is green and yet ungovern'd:[6]
Where every horse bears his commanding rein,
And may direct his course as please himself,
As well the fear of harm as harm apparent,
In my opinion, ought to be prevented.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I hope the king made peace with all of us;
And the compact is firm and true in me.

EARL RIVERS.

And so in me; and so, I think, in all:
Yet, since it is but green,[7] it should be put
To no apparent likelihood of breach,
Which haply[8] by much company might be urged:[9]
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham,
That it is meet[10] so few should fetch the prince.

LORD HASTINGS.

And so say I.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Then be it so; and go we to determine
Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.[11]

[1] **Me seemeth good:** it seems a good idea to me. [2] **some little train:** a small retinue of followers. [3] **Ludlow:** Ludlow Castle, in Wales. [4] **fet:** fetched. [5] **estate:** state. [6] **is green and yet ungovern'd:** has a new regime for which the machinery of government has not yet been set up. [7] **green:** new (not tried). [8] **haply:** perhaps. [9] **urged:** mentioned. [10] **meet:** fitting. [11] **straight shall post to Ludlow:** shall set out immediately for Ludlow Castle.

Madam,—and you, my mother,—will you go
To give your censures[1] in this business?

QUEEN ELIZABETH *and* DUCHESS OF YORK.

With all our hearts.

[*Exeunt all except* BUCKINGHAM *and* GLOSTER.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, whoever journeys to the prince,
For God's sake, let not us two stay at home;
For, by the way,[2] I'll sort occasion,[3]
As index[4] to the story we late[5] talkt of,
To part[6] the queen's proud kindred from the prince.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

My other self, my counsel's consistory,[7]
My oracle, my prophet!—my dear cousin,
I, as a child, will go by thy direction.
Towards Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

London. A street.

Enter two CITIZENS, *meeting.*

FIRST CITIZEN.

Good morrow, neighbour: whither away so fast?

SECOND CITIZEN.

I promise you I scarcely know myself:
Hear you the news abroad?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Ay,—that the king is dead.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ill news, by'r lady;[8] seldom comes the better:[9]

[1] **censures:** opinions; counsels. [2] **by the way:** on the way. [3] **sort occasion:** choose an opportunity. [4] **index:** prologue; introduction. [5] **late:** recently. [6] **part:** separate. [7] **my counsel's consistory:** my thoughts' council chamber. [8] **by'r lady:** by Our Lady (a mild oath). [9] **seldom comes the better:** from Heywood's *Proverbes*: "The better cumth seldome," meaning, bad situations seldom get better.

I fear, I fear 'twill prove a giddy[1] world.

Enter another CITIZEN.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Neighbours, God speed!

FIRST CITIZEN.

Give you good morrow, sir.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Doth the news hold [2] of good King Edward's death?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ay, sir, it is too true; God help, the while! [3]

THIRD CITIZEN.

Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

FIRST CITIZEN.

No, no; by God's good grace his son shall reign.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Woe to that land that's govern'd by a child! [4]

SECOND CITIZEN.

In him there is a hope of government,
That, in his nonage,[5] council under him,
And, in his full and ripen'd years, himself,
No doubt, shall then, and till then, govern well.

FIRST CITIZEN.

So stood the state when Henry the Sixth
Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Stood the state so? No, no, good friends, God wot;[6]
For then this land was famously enricht
With politic[7] grave counsel; then the king
Had virtuous uncles[8] to protect his Grace.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Why, so hath this,[9] both by his father and mother.

[1] **giddy:** disorganized; unsettled. [2] **hold:** hold true. [3] **God help, the while:** God help us, at the present time. [4] **Woe . . . child:** see Ecclesiastes 10:16. [5] **in his nonage:** i.e., during the time he is a minor. [6] **God wot:** God knows. [7] **politic:** wise in political matters. [8] **virtuous uncles:** the Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester (Humphrey). [9] **this:** this one (the young Edward).

THIRD CITIZEN.

Better it were they all came by his father,
Or by his father there were none at all;
For emulation[1] now, who shall be nearest,
Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.
O, full of danger[2] is the Duke of Gloster!
And the queen's sons and brothers haught[3] and proud:
And were they to be ruled, and not to rule,
This sickly land might solace[4] as before.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Come, come, we fear the worst; all will be well.

THIRD CITIZEN.

When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks;
When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand;
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?
Untimely storms make men expect a dearth.
All may be well; but, if God sort[5] it so,
'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Truly, the hearts of men are full of fear:
You cannot reason[6] almost with a man
That looks not heavily[7] and full of dread.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Before the days of change, still is it so:[8]
By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust[9]
Ensuing danger; as, by proof, we see
The waters swell before a boisterous storm.
But leave it all to God.—Whither away?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Marry,[10] we were sent for to the justices.

THIRD CITIZEN.

And so was I: I'll bear you company. [*Exeunt.*

[1] **emulation:** rivalry; envy. [2] **full of danger:** full of mischief (dangerous schemes). [3] **haught:** haughty; overbearing. [4] **solace:** be happy. [5] **sort:** ordain [6] **reason:** talk; carry on a conversation. [7] **heavily:** sorrowful. [8] **Before . . . so:** i.e., it is always this way just before a revolution. [9] **mistrust:** anticipate; suspect. [10] **Marry:** by the Virgin Mary.

Scene IV.

London. The palace.

Enter the Archbishop of York, *the young* Duke of York, *the* Queen, *and the* Duchess of York.

Archbishop of York.
Last night, I hear, they lay at Northampton;
At Stony-Stratford will they be to-night;
To-morrow, or next day, they will be here.

Duchess of York.
I long with all my heart to see the prince:
I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.

Queen Elizabeth.
But I hear, no; they say my son of York[1]
Has almost overta'en[2] him in his growth.

Duke of York.
Ay, mother; but I would not have it so.

Duchess of York.
Why, my young cousin, it is good to grow.

Duke of York.
Grandam, one night, as we did sit at supper,
My uncle Rivers[3] talkt how I did grow
More than my brother: 'Ay,' quoth my uncle Gloster,
'Small herbs have grace,[4] great weeds do grow apace:'
And since, methinks, I would not grow so fast,
Because sweet flowers are slow, and weeds make haste.

Duchess of York.
Good faith, good faith, the saying did not hold
In him[5] that did object[6] the same to thee:

[1] **my son of York:** her younger son by Edward IV—the young Duke of York. [2] **overta'en:** overtaken; outstripped. [3] **uncle Rivers:** the queen's brother, Earl Rivers. [4] **grace:** favor; virtue; healing power. [5] **him:** Richard. [6] **object:** object to.

He was the wretched'st[1] thing when he was young
So long a-growing and so leisurely,
That, if his rule were true,[2] he should be gracious.[3]

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

And so, no doubt, he is, my gracious madam.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

I hope he is; but yet let mothers doubt.

DUKE OF YORK.

Now, by my troth,[4] if I had been remember'd,[5]
I could have given my uncle's Grace[6] a flout,[7]
To touch his growth nearer than he toucht mine.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

How, my young York? I prithee, let me hear it.

DUKE OF YORK.

Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast
That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old:[8]
'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth.
Grandam, this would have been a biting jest.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

I prithee, pretty York, who told thee this?

DUKE OF YORK.

Grandam, his nurse.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

His nurse! why, she was dead ere thou wast born.

DUKE OF YORK.

If 'twere not she, I cannot tell who told me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

A parlous boy:[9]—go to, you are too shrewd.[10]

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Good madam, be not angry with the child.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Pitchers have ears.[11]

[1] **wretched'st:** most pitiful. [2] **if his rule were true:** if his yardstick were accurate. [3] **gracious:** righteous; full of grace. [4] **troth:** faith. [5] **remember'd:** reminded. [6] **my uncle's Grace:** that is, His Grace, my uncle's. [7] **flout:** taunt. [8] **gnaw a crust at two hours old:** it was a tradition that Richard was born with a full set of teeth. [9] **A parlous boy:** an *enfant terrible;* a precocious boy. [10] **shrewd:** sharp. [11] **Pitchers have ears:** From Heywood's *Proverbes*—"Small pitchers have wyde ears"—meaning that children hear and understand more than grownups think they do.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Here comes a messenger.

Enter a MESSENGER.

What news?

MESSENGER.

Such news, my lord, as grieves me to report.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

How doth the prince?

MESSENGER.

Well, madam, and in health.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

What is thy news, then?

MESSENGER.

Lord Rivers and Lord Grey are sent to Pomfret,
With them Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Who hath committed them?

MESSENGER.

The mighty dukes
Gloster and Buckingham.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

For what offence?

MESSENGER.

The sum of all I can I have disclosed;
Why or for what these nobles were committed
Is all[1] unknown to me, my gracious lady.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ay me, I see the downfall of our house!
The tiger now hath seized the gentle hind;[2]
Insulting tyranny begins to jet
Upon[3] the innocent and aweless[4] throne:
Welcome, destruction, blood, and massacre!
I see, as in a map,[5] the end of all.

[1] **all:** completely.
[2] **the gentle hind:** a female deer, and therefore a gentle creature.
[3] **jet/Upon:** encroach upon.
[4] **aweless:** i.e., lacking the majesty which should inspire awe.
[5] **as in a map:** as though it were mapped out (spread out) before me.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,
How many of you have mine eyes beheld!
My husband lost his life to get the crown;
And often up and down my sons were tost,
For me to joy[1] and weep their gain and loss:
And being seated,[2] and domestic broils
Clean over-blown,[3] themselves, the conquerors,
Make war upon themselves; brother to brother,
Blood to blood, self against self:—O, preposterous[4]
And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen;[5]
Or let me die, to look on death no more!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary.[6]—
Madam, farewell.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Stay, I will go with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

You have no cause.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK [*to the* QUEEN].

My gracious lady, go;
And thither bear your treasure and your goods.
For my part, I'll resign unto your Grace
The seal [7] I keep: and so betide to me[8]
As well I tender you and all of yours! [9]
Come, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary. [*Exeunt.*

[1] **joy:** rejoice at. [2] **seated:** settled. [3] **Clean over-blown:** completely past. [4] **preposterous:** contrary to nature. [5] **spleen:** malice. [6] **sanctuary:** the protection of the Church (Westminster). [7] **The seal:** the Great Seal of England. [8] **and so betide to me:** and may fortune treat me. [9] **As well . . . yours:** as well as I look after you and yours.

RICHARD THE THIRD

ACT 3

ACT III

RICHARD, Buckingham, and a small party arrive in London with Edward, Prince of Wales. The Prince complains of the meagerness of his welcome and inquires about his brother, Richard, Duke of York. Hastings is sent to bring York—forcibly, if necessary—from the sanctuary. Shortly afterwards, York arrives, and in conversation with Gloucester proves himself to be precociously witty and shrewd. The two princes soon depart for their lodgings in the Tower, lodgings chosen against their wishes by Richard. Catesby is then sent by Richard and Buckingham to sound out Hastings' loyalties. After Catesby leaves, Richard promises Buckingham an earldom and all of Edward IV's "moveables" as reward for his support.

At Hastings' house a messenger of Derby's enters with Derby's warning of Richard's intentions. Hastings dismisses the warning lightly; and as the messenger departs, Catesby arrives with word of Richard's designs upon the throne, and of the imminent death of Hastings' enemies, Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey. Hastings indicates his opposition to Richard's plans but expresses confidence in Richard's friendship. Derby himself then arrives, repeats his warning, and prepares to go to the Tower with Hastings and Catesby.

At Pomfret Castle, Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan—about to be executed—recall Margaret's curse upon them "For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son." Later, at the Tower, Buckingham, Hastings, Derby, and others meet to decide a time for the coronation of Edward V. Richard strolls in late and seems little interested in their deliberations. Buckingham soon draws him aside and informs him of Hastings' lack of support. Within minutes, Richard has ordered the execution of Hastings.

Later, outside the Tower walls, Richard and Buckingham persuade the Lord Mayor that Hastings was guilty of traitorous behavior, and the Mayor agrees to inform the citizens of this. Richard then instructs Buckingham to spread rumors that Edward IV's children are illegitimate, and, indeed, that Edward himself was, also.

Later on, at Baynard's Castle, Richard, Buckingham, and Catesby execute a masterful political performance. When the Mayor and a group of citizens arrive to ask Richard to accept the crown, Richard feigns great piety, patriotism, and reluctance to assume the kingship. Eventually he consents to bear fortune's burden, though protesting his unwillingness. The citizens, aware that they are being deceitfully manipulated, utter only a sullen "Amen" to Buckingham's "Long live King Richard, England's worthy King!"

ACT III. Scene I.

London. A street.

The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE, GLOSTER, BUCKINGHAM, CARDINAL BOURCHIER, CATESBY, *and others.*

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Welcome, sweet prince, to London, to your chamber.[1]

[1] your chamber: your province.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign:[1]
The weary way hath made you melancholy.

PRINCE.

No, uncle; but our crosses[2] on the way
Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy:
I want more uncles here to welcome me.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Sweet prince, the untainted virtue of your years
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit;
Nor more can you distinguish of a man
Than of his outward show; which, God He knows,
Seldom or never jumpeth[3] with the heart.
Those uncles which you want[4] were dangerous;
Your Grace attended to[5] their sugar'd words,
But lookt not on the poison of their hearts:
God keep you from them, and from such false friends!

PRINCE.

God keep me from false friends! but they were none.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

My lord, the mayor of London comes to greet you.

Enter the LORD MAYOR *and his* TRAIN.

MAYOR.

God bless your Grace with health and happy days!

[1] **my thoughts' sovereign:** king of my thoughts.
[2] **crosses:** difficulties.
[3] **jumpeth:** agrees.
[4] **want:** lack; need.
[5] **attended to:** listened to.

PRINCE.

I thank you, good my lord;—and thank you all.

[MAYOR *and his* TRAIN *retire.*

I thought my mother, and my brother York,
Would long ere this have met us on the way:
Fie, what a slug[1] is Hastings, that he comes not
To tell us whether they will come or no!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

And, in good time, here comes the sweating lord.

Enter HASTINGS.

PRINCE.

Welcome, my lord: what, will our mother come?

LORD HASTINGS.

On what occasion,[2] God He knows, not I,
The queen your mother, and your brother York,
Have taken sanctuary: the tender prince
Would fain have come with me to meet your Grace,
But by his mother was perforce[3] withheld.[4]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Fie, what an indirect[5] and peevish[6] course
Is this of hers!—Lord Cardinal, will your Grace
Persuade the queen to send the Duke of York
Unto his princely brother presently? [7]
If she deny, Lord Hastings, go with him,
And from her jealous[8] arms pluck him perforce.

CARDINAL BOURCHIER.

My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory
Can from his mother win the Duke of York,
Anon expect him here; but if she be obdurate
To mild entreaties, God in heaven forbid
We should infringe the holy privilege
Of blessed sanctuary! not for all this land

[1] **slug:** sluggard. [2] **On what occasion:** on what ground. [3] **perforce:** by force; forcibly. [4] **withheld:** restrained. [5] **indirect:** wrong. [6] **peevish:** perverse. [7] **presently:** immediately. [8] **jealous:** suspicious.

Would I be guilty of so great a sin.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

You are too senseless-obstinate,[1] my lord,
Too ceremonious[2] and traditional:
Weigh it but with the grossness of this age,
You break not sanctuary in seizing him.[3]
The benefit thereof is always granted
To those whose dealings have deserved the place,
And those who have the wit to claim the place:
This prince hath neither claim'd it nor deserved it;[4]
And *therefore, in mine opinion, cannot* have it:
Then, taking him from thence that is not there,
You break no privilege nor charter there.
Oft have I heard of sanctuary-men;
But sanctuary-children ne'er till now.

CARDINAL BOURCHIER.

My lord, you shall o'er-rule my mind for once.—
Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?

LORD HASTINGS.

I go, my lord.

PRINCE.

Good lords, make all the speedy haste you may.

[*Exeunt* CARDINAL *and* HASTINGS.

Say, uncle Gloster, if our brother come,
Where *shall we sojourn till our coronation?*

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Where it seems best unto your royal self.
If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower;[5]
Then where you please, and shall be thought most fit
For your best health and recreation.

[1] ***senseless-obstinate:*** *foolishly particular or prejudiced.* [2] **Too ceremonious:** too observant of the formalities. [3] **Weigh . . . him:** i.e., if you compare this act with the coarseness (lack of morals) of the times, you will feel no compunctions about taking him from the sanctuary. [4] **This prince hath neither claim'd it nor deserved it:** that is, the prince has not asked for sanctuary for himself, and he has done nothing wrong to warrant his seeking sanctuary. [5] **Tower:** the Tower at this time had sumptuous apartments reserved for the king's use.

PRINCE.

I do not like the Tower, of any place.[1]—
Did Julius Cæsar build that place, my lord?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

He did, my gracious lord, begin that place;
Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified.[2]

PRINCE.

Is it upon record, or else reported
Successively from age to age, he built it?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Upon record, my gracious lord.

PRINCE.

But say, my lord, it were not register'd,[3]
Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
As 'twere retail'd [4] to all posterity,
Even to the general all-ending day.[5]

DUKE OF GLOSTER [*aside*].

So wise so young, they say, do never live long.

PRINCE.

What say you, uncle?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I say, without characters,[6] fame lives long.—
[*aside*] Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity,
I moralize two meanings in[7] one word.

PRINCE.

That Julius Cæsar was a famous man;
With what his valour did enrich his wit,
His wit set down to make his valour live:
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.
I'll tell you what, my cousin Buckingham,—

[1] **I do not . . . place:** i.e., the Tower is my least favorite place. [2] **re-edified:** rebuilt. [3] **register'd:** officially recorded. [4] **retail'd:** passed on; handed down. [5] **general all-ending day:** i.e., the Judgment Day. [6] **without characters:** without written historical records (with a pun on *character*). [7] **I moralize two meanings in:** I give two meanings for (Richard pretends to have repeated the sentence that the young prince heard only indistinctly).

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

What, my gracious lord?

PRINCE.

An if [1] I live until I be a man,
I'll win our ancient right in France again,
Or die a soldier, as I lived a king.

DUKE OF GLOSTER [*aside*].

Short summers lightly have a forward spring.[2]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Now, in good time, here comes the Duke of York.

Enter young YORK, HASTINGS, *and the* CARDINAL.

PRINCE.

Richard of York! how fares our[3] loving brother?

DUKE OF YORK.

Well, my dread lord; so must I call you now.

PRINCE.

Ay, brother,—to our grief, as it is yours:
Too late[4] he died that might have kept that title,
Which by his death hath lost much majesty.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

DUKE OF YORK.

I thank you, gentle uncle. O, my lord,
You said that idle weeds are fast in growth:
The prince my brother hath outgrown me far.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

He hath, my lord.

DUKE OF YORK.

And therefore is he idle?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

O, my fair cousin, I must not say so.

[1] **An if:** if.
[2] **Short summers lightly have a forward spring:** a paraphrasing of Richard's previous proverb—"So wise, so young, they say, do never live long"; lightly: usually.
[3] **our:** a case of the royal "we."
[4] **late:** lately; recently.

DUKE OF YORK.

Then he is more beholding to you than I.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

He may command me as my sovereign;
But you have power in me as in a kinsman.

DUKE OF YORK.

I pray you, uncle, give me this dagger.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

My dagger, little cousin? with all my heart.

PRINCE.

A beggar, brother?

DUKE OF YORK.

Of my kind uncle, that I know will give;
And being but a toy,[1] which is no grief to give.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

A greater gift than that I'll give my cousin.

DUKE OF YORK.

A greater gift! O, that's the sword to it.[2]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Ay, gentle cousin, were it[3] light enough.

DUKE OF YORK.

O, then, I see you will part with but light[4] gifts;
In weightier things you'll say a beggar nay.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

It is too heavy for your Grace to wear.

DUKE OF YORK.

I weigh it lightly, were it heavier.[5]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What, would you have my weapon, little lord?

DUKE OF YORK.

I would, that I might thank you as you call me.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

How?

[1] **a toy:** something of little value; a trifle.
[2] **to it:** to match it.
[3] **were it:** if it were.
[4] **light:** unimportant.
[5] **I weigh . . . heavier:** that is, even if it were heavier, I should consider it only a trifling (small) gift.

DUKE OF YORK.

Little.

PRINCE.

My Lord of York will still be cross in talk:[1]—
Uncle, your Grace knows how to bear with him.

DUKE OF YORK.

You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me:—
Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
Because that[2] I am little, like an ape,[3]
He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.[4]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM [*aside to* HASTINGS].

With what a sharp-provided [5] wit he reasons!
To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,
He prettily and aptly taunts himself:
So cunning and so young is wonderful.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

My lord, will't please you pass along?
Myself and my good cousin Buckingham
Will to your mother, to entreat of her
To meet you at the Tower and welcome you.

DUKE OF YORK.

What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

PRINCE.

My lord Protector needs will have it so.

DUKE OF YORK.

I shall not sleep in quiet[6] at the Tower.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Why, what should you fear?

DUKE OF YORK.

Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost:
My grandam told me he was murder'd there.

[1] **will still be cross in talk:** will always be perverse in his talk—that is, a punster. [2] **Because that:** because. [3] **like an ape:** the court jester sometimes carried a monkey on his shoulders. [4] **bear me on your shoulders:** there is a double meaning here; the young duke is trying to hurt his uncle by making fun of the hump he carries on his back. [5] **sharp-provided:** well-equipped (with a biting quickness). [6] **in quiet:** peacefully.

PRINCE.

I fear no uncles dead.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Nor none that live, I hope.

PRINCE.

An if they live, I hope I need not fear.
But come, my lord; and with a heavy heart,
Thinking on them, go I unto the Tower.

[*A sennet.*[1] *Exeunt all but* GLOSTER, BUCKINGHAM, *and* CATESBY.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Think you, my lord, this little prating York
Was not incensed [2] by his subtle[3] mother
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

No doubt, no doubt: O, 'tis a parlous[4] boy,
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable:[5]
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Well, let them rest.—Come hither, Catesby. Thou
Art sworn as deeply to effect what we intend
As closely to conceal what we impart:
Thou know'st our reasons urged upon the way;—
What think'st thou? is it not an easy matter
To make William Lord Hastings of our mind,
For the instalment[6] of this noble duke[7]
In the seat royal of this famous isle?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

He for his father's sake so loves the prince,
That he will not be won to aught against him.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

What think'st thou, then, of Stanley? will not he?

[1] **sennet:** notes on a trumpet, to announce the arrival or departure of important personages. [2] **incensed:** incited (to his actions). [3] **subtle:** crafty. [4] **parlous:** a form of perilous; clever. [5] **capable:** intelligent; gifted. [6] **instalment:** enthroning. [7] **this noble duke:** Richard.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Well, then, no more but this: go, gentle Catesby,
And, as it were far off,[1] sound [2] thou Lord Hastings,
How he doth stand affected to our purpose;[3]
And summon him to-morrow to the Tower,
To sit about[4] the coronation.
If thou dost find him tractable to us,
Encourage him, and show him all our reasons:
If he be leaden, icy-cold, unwilling,
Be thou so too; and so break off your talk,
And give us notice of his inclination:
For we to-morrow hold divided councils,[5]
Wherein thyself shalt highly be employ'd.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Commend me to Lord William: tell him, Catesby,
His ancient knot[6] of dangerous adversaries
To-morrow are let blood [7] at Pomfret-castle;[8]
And bid my friend, for joy of this good news,
Give Mistress Shore[9] one gentle kiss the more.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Good Catesby, go, effect this business soundly.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

My good lords both, with all the heed I can.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Shall we hear from you, Catesby, ere we sleep?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

You shall, my lord.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

At Crosby-place, there shall you find us both.

[*Exit* CATESBY.

[1] **as it were far off:** i.e., casually. [2] **sound:** sound out. [3] **How . . . purpose:** whether he will be favorably disposed toward our seizure of the throne. [4] **sit about:** sit in council in regard to. [5] **divided councils:** in addition to the council to plan the coronation of Prince Edward, Richard intends to hold a private council to plan his own coronation. [6] **ancient knot:** old gang. [7] **let blood:** to be beheaded. [8] **Pomfret-castle:** Pontefract Castle. [9] **Mistress Shore:** after King Edward IV's death, Jane Shore became Hastings' mistress.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Now, my lord, what shall we do, if we perceive
Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots? [1]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Chop off his head, man;—somewhat we will do:[2]—
And, look, when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford, and the moveables[3]
Whereof the king my brother stood possest.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I'll claim that promise at your Grace's hand.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

And look to have it yielded with all kindness.
Come, let us sup betimes,[4] that afterwards
We may digest our complots in some form.[5] [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Before LORD HASTINGS' *house.*

Enter a MESSENGER *to the door of* HASTINGS.

MESSENGER.

My lord! my lord!— [*Knocking.*

LORD HASTINGS [*within*].

Who knocks?

MESSENGER.

One from the Lord Stanley.

LORD HASTINGS [*within*].

What is 't o'clock?

MESSENGER.

Upon the stroke of four.

Enter HASTINGS.

LORD HASTINGS.

Cannot thy master sleep these tedious nights?

[1] **complots:** conspiracy.
[2] **somewhat we will do:** we'll do something.
[3] **moveables:** i.e., goods that may be removed.
[4] **sup betimes:** dine early.
[5] **digest . . . form:** arrange our plans in an orderly fashion.

MESSENGER.

So it appears by that[1] I have to say.
First, he commends him[2] to your noble self.

LORD HASTINGS.

What then?

MESSENGER.

Then certifies[3] your lordship, that this night
He dreamt the boar[4] had razed off his helm:[5]
Besides, he says there are two councils held;[6]
And that may be determined at the one
Which may make you and him to rue[7] at th' other.
Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,—
If presently[8] you will take horse with him,
And with all speed post with him toward the north,
To shun the danger that his soul divines.[9]

LORD HASTINGS.

Go, fellow, go, return unto thy lord;
Bid him not fear the separated councils:
His honour and myself are at the one,
And at the other is my good friend Catesby;
Where nothing can proceed that toucheth us
Whereof I shall not have intelligence.
Tell him his fears are shallow,[10] wanting instance:[11]
And for his dreams, I wonder he's so simple[12]
To trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers:
To fly the boar before the boar pursues,
Were to incense the boar to follow us,
And make pursuit where he did mean no chase.
Go, bid thy master rise and come to me;
And we will both together to the Tower,
Where he shall see the boar will use us kindly.

[1] **by that:** from what. [2] **commends him:** sends his respects. [3] **certifies:** assures. [4] **the boar:** i.e., Richard (his crest, or badge, was a boar). [5] **razed off his helm:** plucked off his helmet. [6] **held:** being held. [7] **rue:** be sorry. [8] **presently:** immediately. [9] **divines:** prophesies. [10] **shallow:** without foundation. [11] **instance:** proof. [12] **simple:** foolish.

MESSENGER.

I'll go, my lord, and tell him what you say. [*Exit.*

Enter CATESBY.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Many good morrows to my noble lord!

LORD HASTINGS.

Good morrow, Catesby; you are early stirring:
What news, what news, in this our tottering state?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

It is a reeling world, indeed, my lord;
And I believe will never stand upright
Till Richard wear the garland of the realm.[1]

LORD HASTINGS.

How! wear the garland! dost thou mean the crown?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Ay, my good lord.

LORD HASTINGS.

I'll have this crown[2] of mine cut from my shoulders
Before I'll see the crown so foul misplaced.
But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Ay, on my life; and hopes to find you forward
Upon his party[3] for the gain thereof:
And thereupon he sends you this good news,—
That this same very day your enemies,
The kindred of the queen, must die at Pomfret.

LORD HASTINGS.

Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,
Because they have been still[4] my adversaries:
But, that I'll give my voice on Richard's side,

[1] **garland of the realm:** i.e., the crown.
[2] **crown:** head.
[3] **forward/Upon his party:** eager to be on his side.
[4] **still:** always.

To bar my master's heirs in true descent,
God knows I will not do it to the death.[1]

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

God keep your lordship in that gracious[2] mind!

LORD HASTINGS.

But I shall laugh at this a twelve-month hence,—
That they who brought me in my master's hate,
I live to look upon their tragedy.
Well, Catesby, ere a fortnight make me older,
I'll send some packing[3] that yet think not on 't.[4]

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,
When men are unprepared and look not for it.

LORD HASTINGS.

O monstrous, monstrous! and so falls it out
With Rivers, Vaughan, Grey: and so 'twill do
With some men else, that think themselves as safe
As thou and I; who, as thou know'st, are dear
To princely Richard and to Buckingham.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

The princes both make high account of you,—
[*aside*] For they account his head upon the bridge.[5]

LORD HASTINGS.

I know they do; and I have well deserved it.

Enter STANLEY.

Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man?
Fear you the boar, and go so unprovided?

LORD STANLEY.

My lord, good morrow;—good morrow, Catesby:—
You may jest on, but, by the holy rood,[6]
I do not like these several [7] councils, I.

[1] **to the death:** even if I were to die for it. [2] **gracious:** righteous. [3] ***packing:*** *to their deaths.* [4] ***think not on 't:*** *have no suspicion of* it. [5] **account his head upon the bridge:** expect to see his head on London Bridge. [6] **holy rood:** the cross on which Christ was *crucified.* [7] ***several:*** *separate.*

LORD HASTINGS.

My lord,
I hold my life as dear as you do yours;
And never in my days, I do protest,
Was it more precious to me than 'tis now:
Think you, but that I know our state secure,
I would be so triumphant[1] as I am?

LORD STANLEY.

The lords at Pomfret, when they rode from London,
Were jocund, and supposed their states were sure,—
And they, indeed, had no cause to mistrust;
But yet, you see, how soon the day o'ercast.
This sudden stab of rancour[2] I misdoubt:[3]
Pray God, I say, I prove a needless coward!
What, shall we toward the Tower? the day is spent.[4]

LORD HASTINGS.

Come, come, have with you.[5]—Wot you what, my lord?
To-day the lords you talk of are beheaded.

LORD STANLEY.

They, for their truth, might better wear their heads
Than some that have accused them wear their hats.—
But come, my lord, let us away.

Enter a PURSUIVANT.[6]

LORD HASTINGS.

Go on before; I'll talk with this good fellow.

[*Exeunt* STANLEY *and* CATESBY.

How now, sirrah! how goes the world with thee?

[1] **triumphant:** happy; jubilant.
[2] **sudden stab of rancour:** sudden premonition of festering hatred.
[3] **I misdoubt:** I have my misgivings about.
[4] **spent:** passing.
[5] **have with you:** I'll go along with you.
[6] **Pursuivant:** in this case, an officer with the power to make arrests.

PURSUIVANT.

The better that your lordship please to ask.

LORD HASTINGS.

I tell thee, man, 'tis better with me now
Than when thou mett'st me last where now we meet:
Then was I going prisoner to the Tower,
By the suggestion of the queen's allies;
But now, I tell thee—keep it to thyself—
This day those enemies are put to death,
And I in better state than e'er I was.

PURSUIVANT.

God hold it, to your honour's good content![1]

LORD HASTINGS.

Gramercy,[2] fellow: there, drink that for me.

[*Throwing him his purse.*

PURSUIVANT.

God save your lordship! [*Exit.*

Enter a PRIEST.

PRIEST.

Well met, my lord; I am glad to see your honour.

LORD HASTINGS.

I thank thee, good Sir[3] John, with all my heart.
I am in your debt for your last exercise;[4]
Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.[5]

[*He whispers in his ear.*

Enter BUCKINGHAM.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

What, talking with a priest, lord chamberlain!
Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest;
Your honour hath no shriving-work in hand.[6]

LORD HASTINGS.

Good faith, and when I met this holy man,
The men you talk of came into my mind.—
What, go you toward the Tower?

[1] **God hold it . . . content:** may God continue to keep you happy. [2] **Gramercy:** *grand merci*—many thanks (usually addressed to an inferior). [3] **Sir:** a courtesy title for a clergyman. [4] **exercise:** sermon. [5] **content you:** pay or reward you. [6] **hath no shriving-work in hand:** has no need for confession (final absolution of sins).

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I do, my lord; but long I cannot stay there:
I shall return before your lordship thence.

LORD HASTINGS.

Nay, like enough, for I stay[1] dinner there.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM [*aside*].

And supper too, although thou know'st it not.—
Come, will you go?

LORD HASTINGS.

I'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Pomfret Castle.[2]

Enter SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF, *with halberds, carrying* RIVERS, GREY, *and* VAUGHAN *to death.*

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Come, bring forth the prisoners.

EARL RIVERS.

Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell thee this,—
To-day shalt thou behold a subject die
For truth, for duty, and for loyalty.

LORD GREY.

God keep the prince from all the pack of you!
A knot[3] you are of damned blood-suckers.[4]

SIR THOMAS VAUGHAN.

You live that shall cry woe for this hereafter.

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Dispatch; the limit[5] of your lives is out.

EARL RIVERS.

O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!

[1] **stay:** stay for.
[2] ***Pomfret Castle:*** Pontefract Castle—in Yorkshire.
[3] **knot:** gang of conspirators.
[4] **blood-suckers:** murderers.
[5] **limit:** allotted time.

Within the guilty closure[1] of thy walls
Richard the Second here was hackt to death;
And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,[2]
We give thee up our guiltless blood to drink.

LORD GREY.

Now Margaret's curse is faln[3] upon our heads,
When she exclaim'd on Hastings, you, and I,
For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.

EARL RIVERS.

Then cursed she Richard, then cursed she Buckingham,
Then cursed she Hastings:—O, remember, God,
To hear her prayers for them, as now for us!
And for my sister[4] and her princely sons,
Be satisfied, dear God, with our true blood,
Which, as Thou know'st, unjustly must be spilt.

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Make haste; the hour of death is expiate.[5]

EARL RIVERS.

Come, Grey,—come, Vaughan,—let us here embrace:
Farewell, until we meet again in heaven. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

London. The Tower.

Enter BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, *the* BISHOP OF ELY, RATCLIFF, LOVEL, *with others, at a table.*

LORD HASTINGS.

Now, noble peers, the cause why we are met
Is, to determine of the coronation.
In God's name, speak,—when is the royal day?

[1] **closure:** enclosure.
[2] **thy dismal seat:** your ill-omened place.
[3] **is faln:** has fallen.
[4] **my sister:** Queen Elizabeth.
[5] **is expiate:** has fully come.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Are all things ready for that royal time?

EARL OF DERBY.

It is; and wants but nomination.[1]

BISHOP OF ELY.

To-morrow, then, I judge a happy day.[2]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Who knows the lord Protector's mind herein?
Who is most inward [3] with the noble duke?

BISHOP OF ELY.

Your Grace, we think, should soonest know[4] his mind.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Who, I, my lord? We know each other's faces,
But for our hearts, he knows no more of mine
Than I of yours; nor I no more of his
Than you of mine.
Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.

LORD HASTINGS.

I thank his Grace, I know he loves me well;
But, for his purpose in the coronation,
I have not sounded him,[5] nor he deliver'd
His gracious pleasure any way therein:
But you, my noble lords, may name the time;
And in the duke's behalf I'll give my voice,
Which, I presume, he'll take in gentle part.[6]

BISHOP OF ELY.

In happy time,[7] here comes the duke himself.

Enter GLOSTER.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

My noble lords and cousins all, good morrow.
I have been long a sleeper: but, I trust,
My absence doth neglect[8] no great design,[9]

[1] **wants but nomination:** lacks only the naming of the day. [2] **happy day:** favorable day. [3] **inward:** intimate. [4] **soonest know:** be the one most likely to know. [5] **sounded him:** asked him. [6] **in gentle part:** in good grace. [7] **In happy time:** at a most opportune time. [8] **neglect:** cause to be neglected. [9] **great design:** important plan.

Which by my presence might have been concluded.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Had you not come upon your cue, my lord,
William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part,—
I mean, your voice,—for crowning of the king.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Than my Lord Hastings no man might be bolder;
His lordship knows me well, and loves me well.—
My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,[1]
I saw good strawberries in your garden there:
I do beseech you send for some of them.

BISHOP OF ELY.

Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart. [*Exit.*

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.

[*Takes him aside.*

Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,[2]
That he will lose his head ere give[3] consent
His master's child, as worshipfully he terms it,
Shall lose the royalty[4] of England's throne.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Withdraw you hence, my lord; I'll follow you.

[*Exit* GLOSTER, *follow'd by* BUCKINGHAM.

EARL OF DERBY.

We have not yet set down this day of triumph.
To-morrow, in my judgement, is too sudden;[5]
For I myself am not so well provided
As else I would be, were the day prolong'd.[6]

[1] **Holborn:** a district in London where the Bishop of Ely's palace was situated. [2] **so hot:** so stirred up. [3] **ere give:** before he will give. [4] **royalty:** sovereignty. [5] **too sudden:** too soon. [6] **prolong'd:** postponed.

Enter BISHOP OF ELY.

BISHOP OF ELY.

Where is my lord the Duke of Gloucester?
I have sent for these strawberries.
His Grace looks cheerfully and smooth[1] to-day;
There's some conceit or other likes him well,[2]
When he doth bid good morrow with such a spirit.
I think there's never a man in Christendom
That can less hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight[3] shall you know his heart.

EARL OF DERBY.

What of his heart perceive you in his face
By any likelihood he show'd to-day?

LORD HASTINGS.

Marry, that with no man here he is offended;
For, were he, he had shown it in his looks.

EARL OF DERBY.

I pray God he be not, I say.

Enter GLOSTER *and* BUCKINGHAM.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd
Upon my body with their hellish charms?

LORD HASTINGS.

The tender love I bear your Grace, my lord,
Makes me most forward in this noble presence
To doom th' offenders: whosoe'er they be,
I say, my lord, they have deserved death.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Then be your eyes the witness of their evil:
Look how I am bewitcht; behold mine arm

[1] **smooth:** mild.
[2] **some conceit . . . well:** some notion (fancy) or other that pleases him very much.
[3] **straight:** at once.

Is, like a blasted sapling, wither'd up:
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted [1] with that harlot-strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

LORD HASTINGS.

If they have done this thing, my gracious lord,—

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

If! thou protector of this damned strumpet,
Talk'st thou to me of 'ifs'? Thou art a traitor:—
Off with his head!—now, by Saint Paul, I swear
I will not dine until I see the same.—
Lovel and Ratcliff, look that it be done:—
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.

[*Exeunt all, except* HASTINGS, LOVEL, *and* RATCLIFF.

LORD HASTINGS.

Woe, woe for England! not a whit for me;
For I, too fond,[2] might have prevented this.
Stanley did dream the boar did raze his helm;
But I disdain'd it, and did scorn to fly:
Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse[3] did stumble,[4]
And started when he lookt upon the Tower,
As loth to bear me to the slaughter-house.
O, now I need the priest that spake to me:
I now repent I told the pursuivant,
As too triumphing, how mine enemies
To-day at Pomfret bloodily were butcher'd,
And I myself secure in grace and favour.
O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Dispatch,[5] my lord; the duke would be at dinner:
Make a short shrift;[6] he longs to see your head.

[1] **Consorted:** in league. [2] **fond:** foolish. [3] **foot-cloth horse:** a horse with a richly ornamented covering hanging to the ground on either side. [4] **stumble:** considered an omen of bad luck. [5] **Dispatch:** hurry. [6] **short shrift:** short confession (before death).

LORD HASTINGS.

O momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God! [1]
Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,[2]
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready, with every nod, to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

LORD LOVEL.

Come, come, dispatch; 'tis bootless[3] to exclaim.

LORD HASTINGS.

O bloody Richard!—miserable England!
I phophesy the fearfull'st time to thee
That ever wretched age hath lookt upon.—
Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head:
They smile at me who shortly shall be dead. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Tower-walls.

Enter GLOSTER *and* BUCKINGHAM, *in rotten*[4] *armour, marvellous ill-favour'd.*[5]

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Come, cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy colour,
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
And then begin again, and stop again,
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep[6] tragedian;
Speak and look back, and pry[7] on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,
Intending[8] deep suspicion: ghastly looks
Are at my service, like enforced smiles;[9]

[1] **grace of God:** divine grace. [2] **in air of your fair looks:** on the instability of your good moods. [3] **bootless:** useless; in vain. [4] ***rotten:*** rusty and battered. [5] ***ill-favour'd:*** unkempt, and looking anything but noble. [6] **deep:** deeply skilled. [7] **pry:** peer. [8] **Intending:** pretending. [9] **ghastly looks . . . smiles:** that is, I am good at looking fearful and smiling when I don't mean it.

And both are ready in their offices,[1]
At any time, to grace my stratagems.
But what, is Catesby gone?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

He is; and, see, he brings the mayor along.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Let me alone to entertain him.

Enter the MAYOR *and* CATESBY.

Lord mayor,—

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Look to the drawbridge there!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Hark! a drum.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Catesby, o'erlook[2] the walls.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Lord mayor, the reason we have sent,—

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Look back, defend thee,—here are enemies.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

God and our innocency defend and guard us!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Be patient, they are friends,—Ratcliff and Lovel.

Enter LOVEL *and* RATCLIFF, *with* HASTINGS' *head.*

LORD LOVEL.

Here is the head of that ignoble traitor,
The dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

So dear I loved the man, that I must weep.
I took him for the plainest harmless creature
That breathed upon the earth a Christian;
Made him my book,[3] wherein my soul recorded

[1] **offices:** functions.
[2] **o'erlook:** *inspect.*
[3] **book:** confessional; diary.

The history of all her secret thoughts:
So smooth he daub'd [1] his vice with show of virtue,
That, his apparent open guilt[2] omitted,—
I mean, his conversation[3] with Shore's wife,—
He lived from all attainder of suspect.[4]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Well, well, he was the covert'st shelter'd traitor[5]
That ever lived.
Would you imagine, or almost[6] believe,—
Were't not that, by great preservation,[7]
We live to tell it you,—the subtle traitor
This day had plotted, in the council-house,
To murder me and my good Lord of Gloster?

MAYOR OF LONDON.

What, had he so?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What, think you we are Turks or infidels?
Or that we would, against the form of law,
Proceed thus rashly in the villain's death,
But that the extreme peril of the case,
The peace of England and our persons' safety,
Enforc'd [8] us to this execution?

MAYOR OF LONDON.

Now, fair befall you! [9] he deserved his death;
And your good Graces both have well proceeded,
To warn false traitors from the like attempts.
I never lookt for better at his hands,
After he once fell in with Mistress Shore.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Yet had we not determined he should die,
Until your lordship came to see his end;
Which now the loving haste of these our friends,
Somewhat against our meaning, have prevented;

[1] **daub'd**: covered; whitewashed. [2] **his apparent open guilt**: that *is, his generally known sin.* [3] ***conversation***: *intercourse.* [4] **attainder of suspect**: dishonoring stain of suspicion. [5] **covert'st shelter'd traitor**: most secret and closely hidden traitor. [6] **almost**: even. [7] **by great preservation**: i.e., under the protection of God. [8] **Enforc'd**: forced; impelled. [9] **fair befall you**: good fortune come to you.

Because, my lord, we would have had you heard
The traitor speak, and timorously confess
The manner and the purpose of his treason;
That you might well have signified the same
Unto the citizens, who haply[1] may
Misconster us in him,[2] and wail his death.

MAYOR OF LONDON.

But, my good lord, your Grace's word shall serve,
As well as I had seen, and heard him speak;
And do not doubt, right noble princes both,
But I'll acquaint our duteous citizens
With all your just proceedings in this case.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

And to that end we wisht your lordship here,
T' avoid the censures[3] of the carping world.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

But since you come too late of our intent,[4]
Yet witness what you hear we did intend:
And so, my good lord mayor, we bid farewell.

[*Exit* MAYOR.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Go, after, after, cousin Buckingham.
The mayor towards Guildhall hies him in all post:[5]—
There, at your meetest vantage[6] of the time,
Infer[7] the bastardy[8] of Edward's children:
Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen,
Only for saying he would make his son
Heir to the crown; meaning, indeed, his house,[9]
Which, by the sign thereof, was termed so.
Moreover, urge his hateful luxury,[10]
And bestial appetite in change of lust;[11]
Which stretcht unto their servants, daughters, wives,

[1] **haply:** perhaps. [2] **Misconster us in him:** misconstrue (misinterpret) our actions in regard to him. [3] **censures:** judgments. [4] **too late of our intent:** too late to know of our intention beforehand. [5] **hies him in all post:** hurries at the fastest speed possible. [6] **meetest vantage:** most fitting opportunity. [7] **Infer:** allege. [8] **bastardy:** illegitimacy. [9] **his house:** his inn (the Crown). [10] **luxury:** lust. [11] **change of lust:** the fickleness of his lust.

Even where[1] his raging eye or savage heart,
Without control, listed [2] to make a prey.
Nay, for a need, thus far come near my person:—
Tell them, when that my mother went with child [3]
Of that insatiate Edward, noble York
My princely father then had wars in France;
And, by just computation of the time,
Found that the issue[4] was not his begot;[5]
Which well appeared in his lineaments,[6]
Being nothing like the noble duke my father:
Yet touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off;[7]
Because, my lord, you know my mother lives.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Doubt not, my lord, I'll play the orator
As if the golden fee[8] for which I plead
Were for myself: and so, my lord, adieu.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle;[9]
Where you shall find me well accompanied
With reverend fathers and well-learned bishops.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I go; and towards three or four o'clock
Look for the news that the Guildhall affords.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Go, Lovel, with all speed to Doctor Shaw,—
[*to* CATESBY] Go thou to Friar Penker;—bid them both
Meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle.

[*Exeunt* LOVEL, CATESBY, *and* RATCLIFF.

Now will I in, to take some privy order,[10]
To draw the brats of Clarence[11] out of sight;

[1] **Even where:** wherever. [2] **listed:** chose. [3] **went with child:** was pregnant (with Edward). [4] **issue:** child. [5] **his begot:** his son. [6] **lineaments:** features. [7] **as 'twere far off:** i.e., casually. [8] **golden fee:** the crown. [9] **Baynard's Castle:** the home of Richard's mother, on the bank of the Thames, in London. [10] **to take some privy order:** to make private (secret) arrangements. [11] **the brats of Clarence:** the two children of Clarence—Margaret and Edward Plantagenet.

And to give notice that no manner person[1]
Have any time[2] recourse unto the princes. [*Exit.*

Scene VI.

The same. A street.

Enter a SCRIVENER,[3] *with a paper in his hand.*

SCRIVENER.

Here is th' indictment[4] of the good Lord Hastings;
Which in a set hand fairly is engross'd,[5]
That it may be to-day read o'er in Paul's.[6]
And mark how well the sequel[7] hangs together:
Eleven hours I have spent to write it over,
For yesternight by Catesby was it sent me;
The precedent[8] was full as long a-doing:
And yet within these five hours Hastings lived,
Untainted,[9] unexamined, free, at liberty.
Here's a good world the while! Why, who's so gross[10]
That cannot see this palpable device? [11]
Yet who so bold but says he sees it not?
Bad is the world; and all will come to naught
When such ill dealing must be seen in thought.[12] [*Exit.*

Scene VII.

Baynard's Castle.

Enter GLOSTER *and* BUCKINGHAM, *meeting.*

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

How now, how now! what say the citizens?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Now, by the holy mother of our Lord,
The citizens are mum, say not a word.

[1] **no manner person:** no one at all. [2] **any time:** at any time. [3] **Scrivener:** a professional scribe (writer) of legal documents. [4] **indictment:** written condemnation. [5] **in . . . engross'd:** is written out in legal form in legible handwriting. [6] **Paul's:** St. Paul's. [7] **sequel:** sequence of events. [8] **precedent:** first copy (rough draft). [9] **untainted:** unsuspected. [10] **gross:** foolish. [11] **palpable device:** plainly seen-through plan. [12] **seen in thought:** understood, but not mentioned.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Toucht you the bastardy of Edward's children?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I did; with his contract[1] with Lady Lucy,[2]
And his contract by deputy[3] in France;
Th' insatiate greediness of his desires,
And his enforcement of the city wives;
His tyranny for trifles, his own bastardy,—
As being got,[4] your father then in France,
And his resemblance, being not like the duke:
Withal I did infer[5] your lineaments,—
Being the right idea[6] of your father,
Both in your form and nobleness of mind;
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,
Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility;
Indeed, left nothing fitting for the purpose
Untoucht, or slightly handled, in discourse:
And when my oratory drew toward end,[7]
I bade them that did love their country's good
Cry, 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

And did they so?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

No, so God help me, they spake not a word;
But, like dumb statuas[8] or breathing stones,
Stared each on other, and lookt deadly pale.
Which when I saw, I reprehended them;
And askt the mayor what meant this wilful silence:
His answer was,—the people were not used
To be spoke to but by the recorder.[9]
Then he was urged to tell my tale again,—

[1] **contract:** written betrothal. [2] **Lady Lucy:** Elizabeth Lucy, with whom Edward had an affair before he was married to Lady Elizabeth Grey. [3] **contract by deputy:** betrothal, through an emissary, to the sister-in-law of Louis IX. [4] **got:** begotten; conceived. [5] **infer:** bring to their attention. [6] **the right idea:** the exact image. [7] **end:** its end. [8] **statuas:** statues. [9] **the recorder:** a high official of the City of London to whom was entrusted the recording and reading aloud of legal affairs; in this instance, he was Thomas Fitzwilliam.

'Thus saith the duke, thus hath the duke inferr'd;'
But nothing spake in warrant[1] from himself.
When he had done, some followers of mine own,
At lower end of the hall, hurl'd up their caps,
And some ten voices cried, 'God save King Richard!'
And thus I took the vantage[2] of those few,—
'Thanks, gentle citizens and friends,' quoth I;
'This general applause and cheerful shout
Argues your wisdom and your love to Richard:'
And even here brake off, and came away.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

What tongueless blocks[3] were they! would they not speak?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

No, by my troth, my lord.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Will not the mayor, then, and his brethren, come?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

The mayor is here at hand. Intend [4] some fear;
Be not you spoke with but by mighty suit:[5]
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
And stand between two churchmen, good my lord;
For on that ground I'll make a holy descant:[6]
And be not easily won to our request;
Play the maid's part,—still answer nay, and take it.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I go; and if you plead as well for them
As I can say nay to thee for myself,
No doubt we'll bring it to a happy issue.[7]

[1] **in warrant:** in support of the facts. [2] **the vantage:** advantage. [3] **blocks:** blockheads; unfeeling stones. [4] **Intend:** pretend. [5] **by mighty suit:** after much urging. [6] **make a holy descant:** improvise a righteous argument (with a play on *holy* because Richard has surrounded himself with clergymen). [7] **issue:** outcome.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Go, go, up to the leads;[1] the lord mayor knocks.

[*Exit* GLOSTER.

Enter the MAYOR, ALDERMEN, *and* CITIZENS.

Welcome, my lord: I dance attendance[2] here;
I think the duke will not be spoke withal.

Enter CATESBY.

Now, Catesby, what says your lord to my request?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

He doth entreat your Grace, my noble lord,
To visit him to-morrow or next day:
He is within, with two right-reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation:
And in no worldly suit would he be moved,
To draw him from his holy exercise.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Return, good Catesby, to the gracious duke;
Tell him, myself, the mayor and aldermen,
In deep designs and matters of great moment,
No less importing[3] than our general good,
Are come to have some conference with his Grace.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

I'll signify so much unto him straight.[4] [*Exit.*

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Ah, ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward!
He is not lolling on a lewd [5] day-bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtezans,
But meditating with two deep[6] divines;
Not sleeping, to engross[7] his idle body,
But praying, to enrich his watchful [8] soul:

[1] **leads:** rooftop. [2] **dance attendance:** "wait to be admitted"—Wright. [3] **No less importing:** *of no less importance.* [4] **straight:** at once. [5] **lewd:** lascivious; *day-bed* is *love-bed* in some editions. [6] **deep:** learned. [7] **to engross:** to fatten. [8] **watchful:** ever-watchful; unsleeping.

Happy were England, would this virtuous prince
Take on himself the sovereignty thereof;
But sure I fear we shall not win him to it.

MAYOR OF LONDON.

Marry, God defend [1] his Grace should say us nay!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I fear he will. Here Catesby comes again.

Enter CATESBY.

Now, Catesby, what says his Grace?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

He wonders to what end [2] you have assembled
Such troops of citizens to come to him,
His Grace not being warn'd thereof before:
He fears, my lord, you mean no good to him.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Sorry I am my noble cousin should
Suspect me, that I mean no good to him:
By heaven, we come to him in perfect love;
And so once more return and tell his Grace.

[*Exit* CATESBY.

When holy and devout religious men
Are at their beads,[3] 'tis much[4] to draw them thence,—
So sweet is zealous contemplation.

Enter GLOSTER *aloft, between two* BISHOPS. CATESBY *returns.*

MAYOR OF LONDON.

See, where his Grace stands 'tween two clergymen!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Two props of virtue for a Christian prince
To stay[5] him from the fall of vanity:[6]
And, see, a book of prayer in his hand,—

[1] **defend:** forbid.
[2] **to what end:** for what reason (purpose).
[3] **beads:** devotions.
[4] **'tis much:** it is difficult.
[5] **stay:** prevent.
[6] **from the fall of vanity:** from falling into frivolous pursuits.

True ornaments[1] to know a holy man.[2]—
Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,
Lend favourable ear to our request;
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

My lord, there needs no such apology:
I rather do beseech you pardon me,
Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Neglect the visitation of my friends.
But, leaving this, what is your Grace's pleasure?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Even that, I hope, which pleaseth God above,
And all good men of this ungovern'd isle.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I do suspect I have done some offence
That seems disgracious[3] in the city's eye;
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.[4]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

You have, my lord: would it might please your Grace,
On our entreaties, to amend your fault!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Know, then, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestical,
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,
Your state of fortune and your due of birth,[5]
The lineal glory of your royal house,[6]
To the corruption of a blemisht stock:
Whilst, in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts—
Which here we waken to our country's good—

[1] **True ornaments:** i.e., the prayer book and the bishops in attendance on Richard. [2] **to know a holy man:** by which to recognize a religious man. [3] **disgracious:** ungracious. [4] **ignorance:** neglect. [5] **your due of birth:** your rightful heritage. [6] **The lineal glory of your royal house:** the glory due you because of direct descent from the royal house of York.

This noble isle doth want[1] her proper[2] limbs;
Her face defaced with scars of infamy,
Her royal stock graft[3] with ignoble plants,
And almost shoulder'd in[4] the swallowing gulf [5]
Of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion.
Which to recure,[6] we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land;—
Not as protector, steward, substitute,
Or lowly factor for another's gain;
But as successively, from blood to blood,
Your right of birth, your empery,[7] your own.
For this, consorted [8] with the citizens,
Your very worshipful [9] and loving friends,
And by their vehement instigation,
In this just suit come I to move your Grace.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

I cannot tell, if to depart in silence,
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof,
Best fitteth my degree[10] or your condition:
If not to answer, you might haply[11] think
Tongue-tied ambition, not replying, yielded
To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty,
Which fondly[12] you would here impose on me;
If to reprove you for this suit of yours,
So season'd with your faithful love to me,
Then, on the other side, I checkt[13] my friends.
Therefore,—to speak, and to avoid the first,
And then, in speaking, not to incur the last,—
Definitively[14] thus I answer you.
Your love deserves my thanks; but my desert
Unmeritable[15] shuns your high request.
First, if all obstacles were cut away.

[1] **want:** lack. [2] **proper:** rightful; own. [3] **graft:** grafted. [4] **shoulder'd in:** jostled into. [5] **gulf:** whirlpool. [6] **recure:** heal again. [7] **empery:** empire. [8] **consorted:** in league; together. [9] **worshipful:** respectful. [10] **degree:** rank. [11] **haply:** perhaps. [12] **fondly:** foolishly. [13] **checkt:** would rebuke. [14] **Definitively:** definitely. [15] **Unmeritable:** undeserving of merit.

And that my path were even[1] to the crown,
As the ripe revenue[2] and due of birth;
Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,[3]
So mighty and so many my defects,
That I would rather hide me from my greatness—
Being a bark[4] *to brook*[5] *no mighty sea*—
Than in my greatness covet to be hid,
And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.
But, God be thankt, there is no need of me;—
And much I need to help you, were there need;—
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit,[6]
Which,[7] mellow'd by the stealing hours of time,[8]
Will well become the seat of majesty,
And make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.
On him I lay what you would lay on me,
The right and fortune of his happy stars;
Which God defend[9] that I should wring from him!

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, this argues conscience in your Grace;
But the respects[10] thereof are nice and trivial,
All circumstances well considered.
You say that Edward is your brother's son:
So say we too, but not by Edward's wife;
For first he was contract to Lady Lucy,—
Your mother lives a witness to his vow,—
And afterward by substitute betroth'd
To Bona, sister to the King of France.
These both put by, a poor petitioner,
A care-crazed mother of a many children,
A beauty-waning and distressed widow,
Even in the afternoon of her best days,
Made prize and purchase[11] of his wanton eye,
Seduced the pitch and height[12] of his degree

[1] **even**: free of obstacles. [2] **ripe revenue**: possession ready to be enjoyed. [3] **poverty of spirit**: humility. [4] **bark**: frail ship. [5] **brook**: endure. [6] **royal fruit**: Edward V. [7] **Which**: who. [8] **mellow'd by the stealing hours of time**: come of age before we have time to realize it. [9] **defend**: forbid. [10] **respects**: considerations. [11] **Made prize and purchase**: seized (as a pirate ship). [12] **pitch and height**: the great height to which he might have soared (*a term in falconry*).

To base declension[1] and loath'd bigamy:[2]
By her, in his unlawful bed, he got
This Edward, whom our manners[3] call the prince.
More bitterly could I expostulate,[4]
Save that, for reverence to some alive,[5]
I give a sparing limit to my tongue.
Then, good my lord, take to your royal self
This proffer'd benefit of dignity;
If not to bless us and the land withal,
Yet to draw forth[6] your noble ancestry
From the corruption of abusing time
Unto a lineal true-derived course.

MAYOR OF LONDON.

Do, good my lord; your citizens entreat you.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffer'd love.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

O, make them joyful, grant their lawful suit!

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?
I am unfit for state and majesty:—
I do beseech you, take it not amiss;
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

If you refuse it,—as; in love and zeal,
Loth to depose the child, your brother's son;
As well we know your tenderness of heart,
And gentle, kind,[7] effeminate remorse,[8]
Which we have noted in you to your kindred,
And egally[9] indeed to all estates,—[10]
Yet whether you accept our suit or no,
Your brother's son shall never reign our king;
But we will plant some other in the throne,

[1] **declension:** decline. [2] **bigamy:** an allusion to Edward's two previous contracts (betrothals); also to Elizabeth's being a widow when he married her. [3] **manners:** code of manners; politeness. [4] **expostulate:** set forth my views; argue. [5] **some alive:** i.e., Richard's mother, the Duchess of York. [6] **draw forth:** restore. [7] **kind:** affectionate by nature. [8] **effeminate remorse:** womanly, or tender, pity. [9] **egally:** equally. [10] **all estates:** all classes of people.

To the disgrace and downfall of your house:
And in this resolution here we leave you.
Come, citizens: zounds,[1] I'll entreat no more.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.

[*Exit* BUCKINGHAM *with the* CITIZENS.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Call him again, sweet prince, accept their suit:
If you deny them, all the land will rue[2] it.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Will you enforce me to[3] a world of cares?
Well, call them again. I am not made of stones,
But penetrable to your kind entreats,[4]
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

Enter BUCKINGHAM *and the others.*

Cousin of Buckingham, and you sage, grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
To bear her burden, whe'r[5] I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load:
But if black scandal or foul-faced reproach
Attend the sequel of your imposition,[6]
Your mere enforcement[7] shall acquittance[8] me
From all the impure blots and stains thereof;
For God He knows, and you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire of this

MAYOR OF LONDON.

God bless your Grace! we see it, and will say it.

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Then I salute you with this royal title,—
Long live King Richard, England's worthy king!

[1] **zounds:** by God's wounds. [2] **rue:** regret. [3] **enforce me to:** force me into. [4] **entreats:** entreaties. [5] **whe'r:** whether. [6] **your imposition:** that is, the burden you have thrust upon me. [7] **Your mere enforcement:** the simple fact that you have forced the crown on me. [8] **acquittance:** acquit.

ALL.

Amen.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

To-morrow may it please you to be crown'd?

DUKE OF GLOSTER.

Even when you please, since you will have it so.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

To-morrow, then, we will attend your Grace:
And so, most joyfully, we take our leave.

DUKE OF GLOSTER [*to the* BISHOPS].

Come, let us to our holy work again.—
Farewell, good cousin; farewell, gentle friends. [*Exeunt.*

RICHARD THE THIRD

ACT 4

ACT IV

MEETING outside the Tower on their way to visit the princes, Elizabeth, her son the Marquess of Dorset, the Duchess of York, Clarence's young daughter Margaret, and the Lady Anne are told that Richard does not permit the princes to have visitors. Derby then arrives to take Anne to the coronation; before she departs, she bitterly laments the folly of her unhappy marriage with Richard. Elizabeth urges Dorset to flee to France.

Shortly after Gloucester ascends the throne as King Richard III, he tests Buckingham's mettle: will Buckingham take part in Richard's plan to murder the princes? Buckingham asks for time to consider, and leaves; this hesitation so angers Richard that he arranges for the murder of the princes on his own. Derby then brings news of Dorset's flight to join Richmond, and Richard at once sets about to consolidate his position. Buckingham later returns to remind Richard of the reward he had been promised, but Richard disdainfully tells Buckingham, "I am not in the giving vein to-day." Later, when word is brought to Richard that the princes have been slain, he reveals in a soliloquy that Anne is dead and that he proposes to marry his late brother Edward's daughter, Elizabeth. Catesby then brings news that the rebel forces of Richmond and Buckingham are growing, and Richard prepares to muster his men.

Outside the palace, Margaret, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York are engaged in mutual lamentation of Richard's evildoing, when Richard arrives. He scornfully endures his mother's "most grievous curse" and her prophecy of his bloody death. After she leaves, he turns to Elizabeth and proposes to marry her daughter Elizabeth. After much disputation, Elizabeth departs, rather ambiguously promising to send Richard word of her daughter's decision.

As various messengers arrive with disturbing news of the forces of Buckingham and Richmond, Richard's poise cracks, his behavior to the messengers is momentarily confused, contradictory, and rash. Suspecting his own followers, Richard holds Derby's son captive, to be released upon condition of Derby's loyalty. Richard is brought news of Buckingham's capture and then prepares to march to Salisbury to meet Richmond. Shortly afterward, Derby sends word to Richmond that his (Derby's) son is being held as ransom, and also that Queen Elizabeth has consented to the marriage of Richmond to her daughter Elizabeth.

ACT IV. Scene I.

London. Before the Tower.

Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF YORK, *and* DORSET; *on the other,* ANNE, DUCHESS OF GLOSTER, *leading* LADY MARGARET PLANTAGENET, CLARENCE'S *young daughter.*

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Who meets us here? my niece Plantagenet,[1]
Led in the hand [2] of her kind aunt of Gloster?
Now, for my life, she's wandering to the Tower,
On[3] pure heart's love, to greet the tender princes.—
Daughter, well met.

LADY ANNE.

God give your Graces both
A happy and a joyful time of day!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As much to you, good sister! Whither away?

[1] **my niece Plantagenet:** Margaret, Clarence's daughter; her granddaughter, not niece.
[2] **Led in the hand:** led by the hand.
[3] **On:** because of.

LADY ANNE.

No further than the Tower; and, as I guess,
Upon the like devotion as yourselves,
To gratulate[1] the gentle princes there.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Kind sister, thanks: we'll enter all together:—
And, in good time, here the lieutenant comes.

Enter BRAKENBURY.

Master lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,
How doth the prince, and my young son of York?

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

Right well, dear madam. By your patience,
I may not suffer[2] you to visit them;
The king hath straitly charged [3] the contrary.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The king! who's that?

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

I mean the lord Protector.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Lord protect him from that kingly title!
Hath he set bounds between their love and me?
I am their mother; who shall bar me from them?

DUCHESS OF YORK.

I am their father's mother; I will see them.

LADY ANNE.

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother:
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame,
And take thy office from thee,[4] on my peril.[5]

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY.

No, madam, no,—I may not leave it so:[6]
I'm bound by oath, and therefore pardon me. [*Exit.*

[1] **gratulate:** greet.
[2] **suffer:** permit.
[3] **hath straitly charged:** has given strict orders.
[4] **take thy office from thee:** take over your duties.
[5] **on my peril:** at my own risk.
[6] **I may not leave it so:** I cannot resign my office.

Enter STANLEY.

LORD STANLEY.

Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,
And I'll salute your Grace of York as mother,
And reverend looker-on, of two fair queens.—
[*to the* DUCHESS OF GLOSTER] Come, madam, you must straight to[1] Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, cut my lace[2] asunder,
That my pent[3] heart may have some scope to beat,
Or else I swoon with this dead-killing news!

LADY ANNE.

Despiteful [4] tidings! O unpleasing news!

MARQUESS OF DORSET.

Be of good cheer:—mother, how fares your Grace?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O Dorset, speak not to me, get thee hence!
Death and destruction dog thee at the heels;
Thy mother's name is ominous to children.
If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,
And live with Richmond,[5] from the reach of hell:[6]
Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house,
Lest thou increase the number of the dead;
And make me die the thrall [7] of Margaret's curse,—
Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted [8] queen.

LORD STANLEY.

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.—
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;
You shall have letters from me to my son
In your behalf, to meet you on the way:
Be not ta'en tardy[9] by[10] unwise delay.

[1] **straight to:** go directly. [2] **lace:** the laces of her corset. [3] **pent:** imprisoned. [4] **Despiteful:** cruel. [5] **go cross . . . Richmond:** Henry Tudor (Earl of Richmond) fled to France after the Battle of Tewksbury. [6] **from the reach of hell:** out of the reach of Richard. [7] **thrall:** slave. [8] **counted:** acknowledged. [9] **ta'en tardy:** taken prisoner because you are too late. [10] **by:** because of.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!—
O my accursed womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice[1] hast thou hatcht to the world,
Whose unavoided eye[2] is murderous.

LORD STANLEY.

Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.

LADY ANNE.

And I in all unwillingness will go.—
O, would to God that the inclusive verge[3]
Of golden metal that must round my brow
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!
Anointed let me be with deadly venom;[4]
And die, ere men can say, 'God save the queen!'

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Go, go, poor soul, I envy not thy glory;
To feed my humour,[5] wish thyself no harm.

LADY ANNE.

No! why?—When he that is my husband now
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse;
When scarce the blood was well washt from his hands
Which issued from my other angel husband,
And that dead saint which then I weeping follow'd;
O, when, I say, I lookt on Richard's face,
This was my wish,—'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accurst,
For making me, so young, so old a widow! [6]
And, when thou wedd'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife—if any be so mad [7]—
More miserable by the life of thee
Than thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!'

[1] **cockatrice:** basilisk. [2] **Whose unavoided eye:** whose eye if unavoided. [3] **inclusive verge:** encircling rim. [4] **deadly venom:** poison, instead of the usual holy oil. [5] **To feed my humour:** to satisfy my mood. [6] **so old a widow:** Anne, though still young, has been a widow for a long time—since Edward the Prince of Wales, was killed at Tewksbury. [7] **if any be so mad:** that is, if anyone be so insane as to marry you.

Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
Even in so short a space, my woman's heart
Grossly[1] grew captive to his honey[2] words,
And proved the subject of mine own soul's curse,—
Which ever since hath kept mine eyes from rest;
For never yet one hour in his bed
Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,
But have been waked by his timorous[3] dreams.
Besides, he hates me for[4] my father Warwick;
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

LADY ANNE.

No more than from my soul I mourn for yours.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Farewell, thou woeful welcomer of glory!

LADY ANNE.

Adieu, poor soul, that takest thy leave of it!

DUCHESS OF YORK [*to* DORSET].

Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!—
[*to* ANNE] Go thou to Richard, and good angels tend thee!—
[*to* QUEEN ELIZABETH] Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!—
I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!
Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,
And each hour's joy wrackt with a week of teen.[5]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Stay yet,[6] look back with me unto the Tower.
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes,

[1] **grossly**: foolishly; stupidly. [2] **honey**: honeyed. [3] **timorous**: fearful; nightmarish. [4] **for**: because of. [5] **each hour's joy . . . teen**: every hour of happiness that I have experienced has been ruined by a week of vexation (reproach). [6] **Stay yet**: wait a while.

Whom envy[1] hath immured [2] within your walls!
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!
Rude ragged [3] nurse, old sullen playfellow
For tender princes, use my babies well!
So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.

London. The Palace.

Sound a sennet. Enter RICHARD, *in pomp, crown'd;* BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY, *a* PAGE, *and others.*

KING RICHARD.

Stand all apart.—Cousin of Buckingham,—

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My gracious sovereign?

KING RICHARD.

Give me thy hand. [*Here he ascendeth the throne.*] Thus high, by thy advice
And thy assistance, is King Richard seated:—
But shall we wear these honours for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Still live they, and for ever let them last!

KING RICHARD.

Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch,[4]
To try if thou be current[5] gold indeed:—
Young Edward lives;—think now what I would speak.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Say on, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD.

Why, Buckingham, I say, I would be king.

[1] **envy:** malice; spite.
[2] **immured:** shut up; walled in.
[3] **ragged:** rough (irregular stone).
[4] **touch:** touchstone (to test gold).
[5] **current:** genuine.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Why, so you are, my thrice-renowned liege.

KING RICHARD.

Ha! am I king? 'tis so:—but Edward lives.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

True, noble prince.

KING RICHARD.

O bitter consequence,
That Edward still should live! 'True, noble prince!'
Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull:[1]
Shall I be plain?—I wish the bastards dead;
And I would have it suddenly[2] perform'd.
What say'st thou now? speak suddenly,[3] be brief.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Your Grace may do your pleasure.

KING RICHARD.

Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness freezes:
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Give me some breath,[4] some little pause, my lord,
Before I positively speak herein:
I will resolve your Grace immediately.[5] [*Exit.*

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY [*aside to another*].

The king is angry; see, he gnaws his lip.

KING RICHARD.

I will converse with iron-witted [6] fools
And unrespective[7] boys: none are for me
That look into me with considerate eyes:[8]
High-reaching[9] Buckingham grows circumspect.
Boy!—

PAGE.

My lord?

[1] **dull:** dull-witted. [2] **suddenly:** promptly; without delay. [3] **suddenly:** quickly. [4] **some breath:** a little while to think. [5] **resolve your Grace immediately:** give a definite answer to your Grace soon. [6] **iron-witted:** dull-witted. [7] **unrespective:** thoughtless; inconsiderate. [8] **none . . . eyes:** none of my confederates have carefully scrutinized my (precarious) situation. [9] **High-reaching:** ambitious.

KING RICHARD.

Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold
Would tempt unto a close[1] exploit[2] of death?

PAGE.

I know a discontented gentleman,
Whose humble means match not his haughty[3] mind:
Gold were as good as twenty orators,
And will, no doubt, tempt him to any thing.

KING RICHARD.

What is his name?

PAGE.

His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.

KING RICHARD.

I partly[4] know the man: go call him hither. [*Exit* PAGE.
The deep-revolving[5] witty[6] Buckingham
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsels:[7]
Hath he so long held out with me untired,
And stops he now for breath?—well, be it so.

Enter STANLEY.

How now! what news with you?

LORD STANLEY.

My lord, I hear the Marquess Dorset's fled
To Richmond, in those parts beyond the seas
Where he abides.

KING RICHARD.

Come hither, Catesby:—rumour it abroad
That Anne, my wife, is very grievous[8] sick;
I will take order for her keeping close.[9]
Inquire me out some mean-born[10] gentleman,
Whom I will marry straight to Clarence' daughter;—

[1] **close:** secret. [2] **exploit:** deed; act. [3] **haughty:** aspiring; ambitious. [4] **partly:** slightly. [5] **deep-revolving:** that is, a man who has to consider every situation from all angles. [6] **witty:** cunning. [7] **the neighbour to my counsels:** my confidant. [8] **very grievous:** critically. [9] **keeping close:** being confined. [10] **mean-born:** of an obscure family.

The boy[1] *is foolish,*[2] and I fear not him.—
Look, how thou dream'st! [3]—I say again, give out
That Anne my queen is sick, and like[4] to die:
About it; for it stands me much upon,[5]
To stop all hopes whose growth may damage me.
[*Exit* CATESBY.
I must be married to my brother's daughter,[6]
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass:—
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood, that sin will pluck on[7] sin:
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

Enter PAGE, *with* TYRREL.

Is thy name Tyrrel?

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

KING RICHARD.

Art thou indeed?

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

Prove me, my gracious sovereign.

KING RICHARD.

Darest thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

Ay, my lord;
But I had rather kill two enemies.

KING RICHARD.

Why, then thou hast it: two deep enemies,
Foes to my rest and my sweet sleep's disturbers,
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:—
Tyrrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

Let me have open means to come to them,[8]
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

[1] **The boy:** Clarence's son, Edward Plantagenet. [2] ***foolish:*** **not** bright. [3] **Look, how thou dream'st:** Catesby is momentarily stunned by Richard's orders. [4] **like:** likely. [5] **it stands me much upon:** it behooves me. [6] **my brother's daughter:** the young Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV and Queen Elizabeth. [7] **pluck on:** induce. [8] **open means to come to them:** free access to them.

KING RICHARD.

Thou sing'st sweet music. Hark, come hither, Tyrrel:
Go, by this token:—rise, and lend thine ear: [*Whispers.*
There is no more but so:[1]—say it is done,
And I will love thee, and prefer[2] thee for it.

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

I will dispatch it straight.[3] [*Exit.*

Enter BUCKINGHAM.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, I have consider'd in my mind
The late demand that you did sound me in.

KING RICHARD.

Well, let that rest.[4] Dorset is fled to Richmond.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I hear the news, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Stanley, he is your wife's son:[5]—well, look to it.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, I claim the gift, my due by promise,
For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd;[6]
Th' earldom of Hereford, and the movables,
The which you promised I should possess.

KING RICHARD.

Stanley, look to your wife: if she convey
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.[7]

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

What says your highness to my just request?

KING RICHARD.

I do remember me,[8]—Henry the Sixth

[1] **no more but so:** nothing else but that. [2] **prefer:** promote; advance. [3] **straight:** immediately. [4] **let that rest:** forget that. [5] **your wife's son:** Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond (later Henry VII) was the wife of Lord Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby. [6] **pawn'd:** pledged. [7] **answer it:** answer for it; be held responsible. [8] **I do remember me:** I do bethink me; I do *recollect.*

Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
A king! perhaps, perhaps—

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord,—

KING RICHARD.

How chance[1] the prophet could not at that time
Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, your promise for the earldom,—

KING RICHARD.

Richmond!—When last I was at Exeter,
The mayor in courtesy show'd me the castle,
And call'd it Rougemont:[2] at which name I started,
Because a bard of Ireland told me once,
I should not live long after I saw Richmond.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

My lord,—

KING RICHARD.

Ay, what's o'clock?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

I am thus bold to put your Grace in mind [3]
Of what you promised me.

KING RICHARD.

Well, but what's o'clock?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Upon the stroke of ten.

KING RICHARD.

Well, let it strike.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Why let it strike?

[1] **How chance:** how chances it that.
[2] **Rougemont:** French for *Richmond.*
[3] **to put your Grace in mind:** to again remind your Grace.

KING RICHARD.

Because that, like a Jack,[1] thou keep'st the stroke
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.[2]
I am not in the giving vein[3] to-day.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Why, then resolve me[4] whether you will or no.

KING RICHARD.

Tut, tut,
Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.

[*Exeunt all except* BUCKINGHAM.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Is it even so? rewards he my true service
With such contempt? made I him king for this?
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone
To Brecknock,[5] while my fearful[6] head is on! [*Exit.*

Scene III.
The same.

Enter TYRREL.

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

The tyrannous and bloody act is done,—
The most arch[7] deed of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.
Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn[8]
To do this ruthless piece of butchery,
Albeit they were flesht[9] villains, bloody dogs,
Melting with tenderness and mild compassion,
Wept like two children in their death's sad story.[10]
'Lo, thus,' quoth Dighton, 'lay the gentle babes,'—
'Thus, thus,' quoth Forrest, 'girdling one another
Within their innocent alabaster arms:

[1] **Jack:** the figure (automaton) that strikes the hours on some clocks. [2] **thou keep'st the stroke . . . meditation:** you keep on begging with mechanical regularity, interrupting my thoughts. [3] **vein:** mood. [4] **resolve me:** satisfy my mind. [5] **Brecknock:** a castle in Wales belonging to Buckingham, where Morton, Bishop of Ely, was held by Richard's orders. [6] **fearful:** full of fear. [7] **most arch:** greatest (in a bad sense). [8] **suborn:** bribe. [9] **flesht:** inured to drawing blood (a hunting term). [10] **in their death's sad story:** in telling of the children's deaths.

Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
Which in their summer beauty kist each other.
A book of prayers on their pillow lay;
Which once,' quoth Forrest, 'almost changed my mind;
But, O, the devil'—there the villain stopt;
When Dighton thus told on,—'We smothered
The most replenished [1] sweet work of nature,
That from the prime[2] creation e'er she framed.'
Hence both are gone with conscience and remorse;
They could not speak; and so I left them both,
To bear this tidings to the bloody[3] king:—
And here he comes.

Enter KING RICHARD.

All health, my sovereign lord!

KING RICHARD.

Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

If to have done the thing[4] you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, be happy then,
For it is done.

KING RICHARD.

But didst thou see them dead?

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

I did, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

And buried, gentle Tyrrel?

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them;
But where, to say the truth, I do not know.

KING RICHARD.

Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at[5] after supper,[6]
When thou shalt tell the process[7] of their death.

[1] **replenished:** perfect; plentifully supplied. [2] **prime:** first. [3] **bloody:** bloodthirsty. [4] **If to have done the thing:** if to have the thing done. [5] **soon at:** toward; around. [6] **after supper:** a second, or late, supper. [7] **process:** story; account.

Meantime, but think how I may do thee good,
And be inheritor of thy desire.
Farewell till then.

SIR JAMES TYRREL.

I humbly take my leave. [*Exit.*

KING RICHARD.

The son of Clarence have I pent up close;
His daughter meanly have I matcht in marriage;
The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,[1]
And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night.
Now, for I know the Breton Richmond [2] aims
At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
And, by that knot,[3] looks proudly on the crown,[4]
To her go I, a jolly thriving[5] wooer.

Enter CATESBY.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

My lord,—

KING RICHARD.

Good news or bad, that thou comest in so bluntly? [6]

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Bad news, my lord: Ely[7] is fled to Richmond;
And Buckingham, backt with the hardy Welshmen,
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

KING RICHARD.

Ely with Richmond troubles me more near[8]
Than Buckingham and his rash-levied [9] strength.
Come,—I have learn'd that fearful commenting
Is leaden servitor to dull delay;[10]
Delay leads impotent and snail-paced beggary:[11]
Then fiery expedition[12] be my wing,
Jove's Mercury, and herald for a king!

[1] **Abraham's bosom:** *see* Luke 16:22; Paradise. [2] **the Breton Richmond:** the Earl of Richmond had been taken to Brittany as a child. [3] **knot:** marriage; alliance. [4] **looks proudly on the crown:** his high hopes of gaining the crown of England. [5] **thriving:** confident of success. [6] **bluntly:** rudely. [7] **Ely:** Morton, the Bishop of Ely. [8] **troubles me more near:** comes much closer to bothering me. [9] **rash-levied:** hastily conscripted. [10] **fearful commenting . . . delay:** cowardly discussion leads to needless delay. [11] **Delay . . . beggary:** delay leads to a suing for peace on any terms. [12] **fiery expedition:** hot haste.

Go, muster men: my counsel is my shield;[1]
We must be brief, when traitors brave the field. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Before the palace.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET.

QUEEN MARGARET.

So, now prosperity begins to mellow,[2]
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
Here in these confines slily have I lurkt,
To watch the waning of mine enemies.
A dire induction[3] am I witness to,
And will to France; hoping the consequence
Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.—
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret: who comes here?
[*Retires.*

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH *and the* DUCHESS OF YORK.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, my poor princes! ah, my tender babes!
My unblown flowers,[4] new-appearing sweets!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air,
And be not fixt in doom perpetual,
Hover about me with your airy wings,
And hear your mother's lamentation!

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

Hover about her; say, that right for right[5]
Hath dimm'd your infant morn to aged night.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

So many miseries have crazed [6] my voice,
That my woe-wearied tongue is still and mute.—
Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

[1] **my counsel is my shield:** my shield is my only counselor.
[2] **mellow:** grow soft.
[3] **induction:** preparation for mischief; the first step in an undertaking.
[4] **unblown flowers:** unopened buds.
[5] **right for right:** justice for justice.
[6] **crazed:** cracked.

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

Plantagenet doth quit[1] Plantagenet,
Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.[2]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Wilt Thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs,
And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
When didst Thou sleep, when such a deed was done?

QUEEN MARGARET [*aside*].

When holy Harry[3] died, and my sweet son.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Dead life, blind sight, poor mortal living[4] ghost,
Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurpt,
Brief abstract and record of tedious days,
Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth, [*Sitting down.*
Unlawfully made drunk with innocents' blood!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, that thou wouldst as soon afford a grave
As thou canst yield a melancholy seat!
Then would I hide my bones, not rest them here.
Ah, who hath any cause to mourn but I?
[*Sitting down by her.*

QUEEN MARGARET [*coming forward*].

If ancient sorrow be most reverend,[5]
Give mine the benefit of seniory,[6]
And let my griefs frown on the upper hand.[7]
If sorrow can admit society,[8] [*Sitting down with them.*
Tell o'er[9] your woes again by viewing mine:—
I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:

[1] **quit:** pay for; balance. [2] **Edward for Edward pays a dying debt:** Edward Plantagenet, Clarence's son, pays the debt of death for Queen Margaret's own son—Edward, Prince of Wales. [3] **holy Harry:** Henry VI, Queen Margaret's husband. [4] **mortal living:** death-in-life. [5] **reverend:** revered. [6] **seniory:** seniority. [7] **frown on the upper hand:** hold the higher place. [8] **society:** partnership. [9] **Tell o'er:** review.

Thou hadst an Edward,[1] till a Richard kill'd him;
Thou hadst a Richard,[2] till a Richard kill'd him.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

I had a Richard [3] too, and thou didst kill him;
I had a Rutland [4] too, thou holp'st[5] to kill him.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard kill'd him.
From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
To worry lambs, and lap their gentle blood;
That foul defacer of God's handiwork;
That excellent grand tyrant[6] of the earth,
That reigns in galled [7] eyes of weeping souls,—
Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.—
O upright, just, and true-disposing God,
How do I thank thee, that this carnal [8] cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body,
And makes her pew-fellow[9] with others' moan!

DUCHESS OF YORK.

O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

QUEEN MARGARET.

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,
And now I cloy me[10] with beholding it.
Thy Edward [11] he is dead, that kill'd my Edward;
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
Young York he is but boot,[12] because both they
Match not the high perfection of my loss:
Thy Clarence he is dead that stabb'd my Edward;

[1] **an Edward:** Edward V. [2] **a Richard:** the young Duke of York. [3] **Richard:** her husband, the Duke of York. [4] **Rutland:** her son—"young Rutland." [5] **holp'st:** helped. [6] **excellent grand tyrant:** preëminently chief tyrant. [7] **galled:** sore. [8] **carnal:** flesh-eating. [9] **pew-fellow:** companion; literally, a person who shares another's church pew. [10] **I cloy me:** I am sated. [11] **Edward:** Edward IV. [12] **boot:** something thrown in for added measure.

And the beholders of this tragic play,
Th' adulterate[1] Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer;[2]
Only reserved [3] their factor,[4] to buy souls,
And send them thither:—but at hand, at hand,
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray,
To have him suddenly convey'd from hence.—
Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,
That I may live to say, 'The dog is dead!'

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O, thou didst prophesy the time would come
That I should wish for thee to help me curse
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-backt toad!

QUEEN MARGARET.

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;
The presentation of but what I was;
The flattering[5] index[6] of a direful pageant;
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;
A mother only mockt with two sweet babes;
A dream of what thou wast; a breath, a bubble;
A sign of dignity, a garish flag[7]
To be the aim of every dangerous shot;
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?
Where be thy two sons? wherein dost thou joy? [8]
Who sues to thee, and cries, 'God save the queen'?
Where be the bending[9] peers that flattered thee?
Where be the thronging troops that followed thee?
Decline[10] all this, and see what now thou art:

[1] **adulterate:** adulterous (referring to Hastings' affair with Jane Shore). [2] **black intelligencer:** evil spy. [3] **reserved:** kept alive. [4] **their factor:** as its agent (of hell). [5] **flattering:** raising false hopes. [6] **index:** prologue. [7] **a garish flag:** a richly dressed standard-bearer. [8] **joy:** experience joy. [9] **bending:** curtsying. [10] **Decline:** *review (in a grammatical sense).*

For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For one being sued-to, one that humbly sues;
For queen, a very caitiff [1] crown'd with care;
For one that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me:
For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;
For one commanding all, obey'd of none;
Thus hath the course of justice[2] wheel'd about,
And left thee but a very prey to time;
Having no more but thought of what thou wast,
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.
Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not
Usurp the just proportion[3] of my sorrow?
Now thy proud neck bears half my burden'd yoke;
From which even here I slip my wearied head,
And leave the burden of it all on thee.
Farewell, York's wife; and queen of sad mischance:
These English woes will make me smile in France.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O thou well-skill'd in curses, stay awhile,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Forbear to sleep the night, and fast the day;
Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is:
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:[4]
Revolving[5] this will teach thee how to curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My words are dull; O, quicken[6] them with thine!

QUEEN MARGARET.

Thy woes will make them sharp, and pierce like mine.

[*Exit.*

[1] **caitiff:** wretch; slave. [2] **course of justice:** wheel of fortune. [3] **just proportion:** exact share. [4] **Bettering . . . worse:** exaggerating your losses will make you hate the cause of them even more. [5] **Revolving:** contemplating; considering. [6] **quicken:** give life to.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Why should calamity be full of words?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Windy[1] attorneys to their client woes,
Airy succeeders of intestate joys,[2]
Poor breathing orators of miseries!
Let them have scope: though what they do impart
Help nothing else, yet do they ease the heart.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

If so, then be not tongue-tied: go with me,
And in the breath of bitter words let's smother
My damned son, that thy two sweet sons smother'd.
[*Drum within.*
I hear his drum:—be copious in exclaims.

Enter KING RICHARD *and his* TRAIN, *marching, with drums and trumpets.*

KING RICHARD.

Who intercepts me in my expedition? [3]

DUCHESS OF YORK.

O, she that might have intercepted thee,
By strangling thee in her accursed womb,
From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Hidest thou that forehead with a golden crown,
Where should be branded, if that right were right,
The slaughter of the prince that owed [4] that crown,
And the dire death of my poor sons and brothers?
Tell me, thou villain-slave, where are my children?

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?
And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?

[1] **Windy:** verbose; full of words.
[2] **succeeders to intestate joys:** heirs to a worthless inheritance (an estate for which there is no will).
[3] **expedition:** hurried march.
[4] **owed:** owned.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Where is the gentle Rivers, Vaughan, Grey?

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Where is kind Hastings?

KING RICHARD.

A flourish,[1] trumpets! strike alarum, drums!
Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women
Rail on[2] the Lord's anointed: strike, I say!

[*Flourish. Alarums.*

Either be patient, and entreat me fair,[3]
Or with the clamorous report of war
Thus will I drown your exclamations.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Art thou my son?

KING RICHARD.

Ay, I thank God, my father, and yourself.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Then patiently hear my impatience.

KING RICHARD.

Madam, I have a touch of your condition,[4]
That cannot brook[5] the accent[6] of reproof.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

O, let me speak!

KING RICHARD.

Do, then; but I'll not hear.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

I will be mild and gentle in my words.

KING RICHARD.

And brief, good mother; for I am in haste.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Art thou so hasty? I have stay'd[7] for thee,
God knows, in torment and in agony.

KING RICHARD.

And came I not at last to comfort you?

[1] **flourish:** loud notes on a trumpet (an insulting harangue on Richard's part). [2] **Rail on:** scold at. [3] **entreat me fair:** treat me courteously. [4] **touch of your condition:** hint of your temperament. [5] **brook:** endure; tolerate. [6] **accent:** tone. [7] **stay'd:** waited (an allusion to Richard's painful and delayed birth).

DUCHESS OF YORK.

No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well,
Thou camest on earth to make the earth my hell.
A grievous burden was thy birth to me;
Tetchy[1] and wayward was thy infancy;
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious;
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous;
Thy age confirm'd,[2] proud, subtle, bloody, treacherous,
More mild, but yet more harmful-kind in hatred:[3]
What comfortable hour canst thou name,
That ever graced me in thy company?

KING RICHARD.

Faith, none, but Humphrey Hour,[4] that call'd your Grace
To breakfast once forth of my company.
If I be so disgracious[5] in your eye,
Let me march on, and not offend you, madam.—
Strike up the drum.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

I prithee, hear me speak.

KING RICHARD.

You speak too bitterly.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Hear me a word;
For I shall never speak to thee again.

KING RICHARD.

So.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

Either thou wilt die, by God's just ordinance,
Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror;

[1] **Tetchy:** peevish; irritable. [2] **Thy age confirm'd:** your maturity; your coming of age. [3] **more harmful-kind in hatred:** seeming kind while being more harmful in your secret schemes. [4] **Humphrey Hour:** no satisfactory explanation has been made for this phrase in its present context. [5] **disgracious:** out of favor.

Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish,
And never look upon thy face again.
Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse;
Which, in the day of battle, tire thee more
Than all the complete armour that thou wear'st!
My prayers on the adverse party fight;
And there the little souls of Edward's children
Whisper the spirits of thine enemies,
And promise them success and victory.
Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
Shame serves[1] thy life, and doth thy death attend. [*Exit.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Though far more cause, yet much less spirit to curse
Abides in me; I say amen to her. [*Going.*

KING RICHARD.

Stay, madam; I must speak a word with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I have no more sons of the royal blood
For thee to murder: for[2] my daughters, Richard,—
They shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens;
And therefore level [3] not to hit their lives.

KING RICHARD.

You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth,
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

And must she die for this? O, let her live,
And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty;
Slander myself as false to Edward's bed;
Throw over her the veil of infamy:
So[4] she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.

[1] **serves:** is servant to.
[2] **for:** as for.
[3] **level:** aim.
[4] **So:** so that.

KING RICHARD.
Wrong not her birth, she is a royal princess.
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
To save her life, I'll say she is not so.
KING RICHARD.
Her life is safest only in her birth.
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
And only in that safety[1] died her brothers.
KING RICHARD.
Lo, at their births good stars were opposite.[2]
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
No, to their lives ill friends were contrary.
KING RICHARD.
All unavoided [3] is the doom of destiny.[4]
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
True, when avoided grace[5] makes destiny:
My babes were destined to a fairer death,
If grace had blest thee with a fairer life.
KING RICHARD.
You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd [6]
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.
Whose hand soever lanced [7] their tender hearts,
Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:
No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt
Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,[8]
My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys
Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
And I, in such a desperate bay of death,
Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,[9]

[1] **safety:** i.e., royal birth. [2] **opposite:** antagonistic; beneficent stars were in opposition (astrology). [3] **All unavoided:** completely unavoidable. [4] **the doom of destiny:** fate. [5] **avoided grace:** one devoid of grace. [6] **cozen'd:** cheated (of life); with a play on *cousins*. [7] **lanced:** pierced. [8] **But that . . . tame:** if it were not for the fact that constant indulgence to grief. [9] **reft:** despoiled.

Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

KING RICHARD.

Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise
And dangerous success of bloody wars,
As I intend more good to you and yours
Than ever you and yours by me were harm'd! [1]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What good is cover'd with the face of heaven,
To be discover'd, that can do me good? [2]

KING RICHARD.

Th' advancement of your children, gentle lady.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads?

KING RICHARD.

No, to the dignity and height of honour,
The high imperial type[3] of this earth's glory.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Flatter my sorrows with report of it;
Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,
Canst thou demise[4] to any child of mine?

KING RICHARD.

Even all I have; ay, and myself and all,
Will I withal endow a child of thine;
So[5] in the Lethe[6] of thy angry soul
Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Be brief, lest that the process[7] of thy kindness
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

KING RICHARD.

Then know, that from my soul I love thy daughter.

[1] **so thrive . . . harm'd:** that is, if I succeed in this dangerous enterprise, and am still king, I intend to pay bountifully for any harm that I have ever done you and yours. [2] **What good . . . good:** what is there left on earth that, revealed, can help me now. [3] **imperial type:** kingly badge (crown). [4] **demise:** transmit (a legal term.) [5] **So:** so that. [6] **Lethe:** the river of Hades, which brings forgetfulness. [7] **process:** story.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

My daughter's mother thinks it with her soul.[1]

KING RICHARD.

What do you think?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

That thou dost love my daughter from[2] thy soul:
So, from thy soul's love, didst thou love her brothers;
And, from my heart's love, I do thank thee for it.

KING RICHARD.

Be not so hasty to confound my meaning:
I mean, that with my soul I love thy daughter,
And do intend to make her Queen of England.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Well, then, who dost thou mean shall be her king?

KING RICHARD.

Even he that makes her queen: who else should be?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What, thou?

KING RICHARD.

I, even I: what think you of it, madam?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

How canst thou woo her?

KING RICHARD.

That would I learn of you,
As one being best acquainted with her humour.[3]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

And wilt thou learn of me?

KING RICHARD.

Madam, with all my heart.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,

[1] **with her soul:** with all her heart.
[2] **from:** away from; apart from.
[3] **humour:** disposition.

A pair of bleeding hearts; thereon engrave
'Edward and York;' then haply[1] will she weep:
Therefore present to her—as sometime[2] Margaret
Did to thy father, steept in Rutland's blood—
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain
The purple sap from her sweet brother's[3] body,
And bid her dry her weeping eyes withal.
If this inducement move her not to love,
Send her a letter of thy noble deeds;
Tell her thou madest away[4] her uncle Clarence,
Her uncle Rivers; ay, and, for her sake,
Madest quick conveyance[5] with her good aunt Anne.

KING RICHARD.

You mock me, madam; this is not the way
To win your daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

There is no other way;
Unless thou couldst put on some other shape,
And not be Richard that hath done all this.

KING RICHARD.

Say that I did all this for love of her?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Nay, then indeed she cannot choose but hear thee,
Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.

KING RICHARD.

Look, what is done cannot be now amended:
Men shall [6] deal unadvisedly sometimes,
Which after-hours gives leisure to repent.
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends, I'll give it to your daughter.
If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase,[7] I will beget

[1] **haply:** perhaps. [2] **sometime:** once. [3] **her sweet brother's:** her half-brother, Lord Grey. [4] **away:** away with. [5] **conveyance:** secret removal. [6] **shall:** cannot help but. [7] **quicken your increase:** give life to your progeny (descendants).

Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter:
A grandam's name is little less in love
Than is the doting[1] title of a mother;
They are as children but one step below,
Even of your mettle,[2] of your very blood;
Of all one pain,—save for a night of groans
Endured of her, for whom you bid[3] like sorrow.[4]
Your children were vexation to your youth;
But mine shall be a comfort to your age.
The loss you have is but a son being king,
And by that loss your daughter is made queen.
I cannot make you what amends I would,
Therefore accept such kindness as I can.
Dorset your son, that with a fearful soul
Leads discontented steps in foreign soil,
This fair alliance quickly shall call home
To high promotions and great dignity:
The king, that calls your beauteous daughter wife,
Familiarly shall call thy Dorset brother;
Again shall you be mother to a king,
And all the ruins of distressful times
Repair'd with double riches of content.
What! we have many goodly days to see:
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed
Shall come again, transform'd to orient[5] pearl,
Advantaging their loan with interest
Of ten-times-double gain of happiness.
Go, then, my mother, to thy daughter go;
Make bold her bashful years with your experience;
Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale;
Put in her tender heart th' aspiring flame[6]

[1] **doting:** fond.
[2] **mettle:** substance.
[3] **bid:** endured.
[4] **like sorrow:** similar pain.
[5] **orient:** lustrous; shining.
[6] **flame:** desire.

Of golden sovereignty;[1] acquaint the princess
With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys:
And when this arm of mine hath chastised
The petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come,
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed;
To whom I will retail [2] my conquest won,
And she shall be sole victress, Cæsar's Cæsar.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

What were I best to say? her father's brother
Would be her lord? or shall I say, her uncle?
Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
Under what title shall I woo for thee,
That God, the law, my honour, and her love,
Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

KING RICHARD.

Infer[3] fair England's peace by this alliance.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Which she shall purchase with still-lasting[4] war.

KING RICHARD.

Tell her, the king, that may command, entreats.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

That at her hands which the king's King forbids.[5]

KING RICHARD.

Say, she shall be a high and mighty queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

To wail [6] the title, as her mother doth.

KING RICHARD.

Say, I will love her everlastingly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But how long shall that title 'ever' last?

KING RICHARD.

Sweetly in force unto her fair life's end.

[1] **golden sovereignty:** gilded rule. [2] **retail:** retell; relate. [3] **Infer:** argue. [4] **still-lasting:** everlasting. [5] **the king's King forbids:** from the *Book of Common Prayer* regarding "brother's daughter." [6] **wail:** bewail.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But how long fairly[1] shall her sweet life last?

KING RICHARD.

As long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As long as hell and Richard likes of it.

KING RICHARD.

Say, I, her sovereign, am her subject love.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.[2]

KING RICHARD.

Be eloquent in my behalf to her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.

KING RICHARD.

Then, plainly to her tell my loving tale.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Plain and not honest is too harsh a style.

KING RICHARD.

Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O, no, my reasons are too deep and dead;—
Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their graves.

KING RICHARD.

Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break.

KING RICHARD.

Now, by my George,[3] my garter,[4] and my crown,—

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Profaned, dishonour'd, and the third usurpt.

[1] **fairly:** happily. [2] **such sovereignty:** i.e., a ruler such as Richard. [3] **my George:** the jeweled figure of St. George on a pendant attached to the collar that was a part of the insignia of the Order of the Garter. [4] **my garter:** Knights of the Garter wore garters embroidered with the motto: *Hons soit qui mal y pense*—"Evil be to him who evil thinks."

KING RICHARD.

I swear—

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

By nothing; for this is no oath:
Thy George, profaned, hath lost his holy honour;
Thy garter, blemisht, pawn'd his knightly virtue;
Thy crown, usurpt, disgraced his kingly glory.
If something thou wouldst swear to be believed,
Swear, then, by something that thou hast not wrong'd.

KING RICHARD.

Now, by the world,—

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.

KING RICHARD.

My father's death,—

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thy life hath that dishonour'd.

KING RICHARD.

Then, by myself,—

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thyself is self-misused.

KING RICHARD.

Why, then, by God,—

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

God's wrong is most of all.
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
The unity the king thy brother made
Had not been broken, nor my brother slain:
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
Th' imperial metal,[1] circling now thy head,
Had graced the tender temples of my child;
And both the princes had been breathing here,
Which now, two tender bedfellows for dust,

[1] **Th' imperial metal:** the crown.

Thy broken faith hath made a prey for worms.
What canst thou swear by now?

KING RICHARD.

The time to come.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast;
For I myself have many tears to wash
Hereafter time,[1] for time past wrong'd by thee.
The children live, whose parents thou hast slaughter'd,
Ungovern'd [2] youth, to wail it in their age;
The parents live, whose children thou hast butcher'd,
Old wither'd plants, to wail it with their age.
Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast
Misused ere used, by time misused o'erpast.

KING RICHARD.

As I intend to prosper and repent,
So thrive I in my dangerous attempt
Of hostile arms! myself myself confound! [3]
Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours!
Day, yield me not thy light; nor, night, thy rest!
Be opposite[4] all planets of good luck
To my proceeding!—if, with pure heart's love,
Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
I tender[5] not thy beauteous princely daughter!
In her consists my happiness and thine;
Without her, follows to myself and thee,
Herself, the land, and many a Christian soul,
Death, desolation, ruin, and decay:
It cannot be avoided but by this;
It will not be avoided but by this.

[1] **Hereafter time:** in time to come.
[2] **Ungovern'd:** undisciplined.
[3] **confound:** destroy.
[4] **opposite:** in opposition.
[5] **tender:** have tender regard for; cherish.

Therefore, dear mother,—I must call you so,—
Be the attorney of my love to her:
Plead what I will be, not what I have been;
Not my deserts, but what I will deserve:
Urge the necessity and state of times,
And be not peevish-fond [1] in great designs.[2]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

KING RICHARD.

Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Shall I forget myself to be myself? [3]

KING RICHARD.

Ay, if your self's remembrance wrong yourself.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

But thou didst kill my children.

KING RICHARD.

But in your daughter's womb I'll bury them:
Where, in that nest of spicery,[4] they shall breed
Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.[5]

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

KING RICHARD.

And be a happy mother by the deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I go.—Write to me very shortly,
And you shall understand from me her mind.

KING RICHARD.

Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell.

[*Exit* QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing[6] woman!

Enter RATCLIFF; CATESBY *following.*

How now! what news?

[1] **peevish-fond:** perversely foolish. [2] **great designs:** grand plans. [3] **Shall I forget myself to be myself:** shall I forget that my children have been murdered in order to be a royal queen mother. [4] **nest of spicery:** an allusion to the fabled phoenix, which burned itself in its nest to give birth to the new phoenix. [5] **recomforture:** renewed consolation; comfort. [6] **shallow, changing:** influenced by trivial things.

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

My gracious sovereign, on the western coast
Rideth a puissant[1] navy; to the shore
Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted[2] friends,
Unarm'd, and unresolved to beat them back:
'Tis thought that Richmond is their admiral;
And there they hull,[3] expecting but the aid
Of Buckingham to welcome them ashore.

KING RICHARD.

Some light-foot[4] friend post to the Duke of Norfolk:—
Ratcliff, thyself,—or Catesby; where is he?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Here, my good lord.

KING RICHARD.

Fly to the duke.—[*to* RATCLIFF] Post[5] thou to Salisbury:
When thou comest thither,—[*to* CATESBY] Dull, unmindful villain,
Why stay'st thou here, and go'st not to the duke?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

First, mighty liege, tell me your highness' pleasure,
What from your Grace I shall deliver to him.

KING RICHARD.

O, true, good Catesby:—bid him levy[6] straight[7]
The greatest strength and power he can make,
And meet me suddenly[8] at Salisbury.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

I go. [*Exit.*

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

What, may it please you, shall I do at Salisbury?

[1] **puissant:** powerful; mighty. [2] **hollow-hearted:** fainthearted. [3] **hull:** drift with furled sails. [4] **light-foot:** swift of foot. [5] **Post:** ride in haste. [6] **levy:** recruit. [7] **straight:** immediately. [8] **suddenly:** without delay.

KING RICHARD.

Why, what wouldst thou do there before I go?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Your highness told me I should post before.

Enter STANLEY.

KING RICHARD.

My mind is changed.—Stanley, what news with you?

LORD STANLEY.

None good, my liege, to please you with the hearing;
Nor none so bad, but well may be reported.

KING RICHARD.

Hoyday,[1] a riddle! neither good nor bad!
What need'st thou run so many miles about,
When thou mayst tell thy tale the nearest way?
Once more, what news?

LORD STANLEY.

Richmond is on the seas.

KING RICHARD.

There let him sink, and be the seas on him,
White-liver'd runagate! [2] what doth he there?

LORD STANLEY.

I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.

KING RICHARD.

Well, as you guess?

LORD STANLEY.

Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,
He makes for England, here, to claim the crown.

KING RICHARD.

Is the chair[3] empty? is the sword unsway'd? [4]
Is the king dead? the empire unpossest?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?
Then, tell me, what makes he[5] upon the seas?

[1] **Hoyday:** heyday; an exclamation of surprise or impatience.
[2] **white-liver'd runagate:** cowardly runaway (renegade).
[3] **chair:** throne.
[4] **the sword unsway'd:** the royal sword unwielded.
[5] **what makes he:** why is he (Richmond).

LORD STANLEY.

Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.

KING RICHARD.

Unless for that he comes to be your liege,
You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.
Thou wilt revolt, and fly to him, I fear.

LORD STANLEY.

No, mighty liege, therefore mistrust me not.

KING RICHARD.

Where is thy power, then, to beat him back?
Where be thy tenants and thy followers?
Are they not now upon the western shore,
Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships?

LORD STANLEY.

No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.[1]

KING RICHARD.

Cold friends to me: what do they in the north,
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?

LORD STANLEY.

They have not been commanded, mighty king:
Pleaseth your majesty to give me leave,
I'll muster up my friends, and meet your Grace
Where and what time your majesty shall please.

KING RICHARD.

Ay, ay, thou wouldst be gone to join with Richmond:
I will not trust you, sir.

LORD STANLEY.

Most mighty sovereign,
You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful:[2]

[1] **in the north:** Stanley's lands were in Cheshire and Lancashire.
[2] **to hold my friendship doubtful:** to doubt my friendship.

I never was nor never will be false.

KING RICHARD.

Go, then, and muster men. But leave behind
Your son, George Stanley: look your faith be firm,
Or else his head's assurance[1] is but frail.

LORD STANLEY.

So deal with him as I prove true to you. [*Exit.*

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

My gracious sovereign, now in Devonshire,
As I by friends am well advertised,[2]
Sir Edward Courtney, and the haughty prelate
Bishop of Exeter[3] his elder brother,
With many moe[4] confederates, are in arms.

Enter a second MESSENGER.

SECOND MESSENGER.

In Kent, my liege, the Guildfords are in arms;
And every hour more competitors[5]
Flock to the rebels, and their power grows strong.

Enter a third MESSENGER.

THIRD MESSENGER.

My lord, the army of great Buckingham—

KING RICHARD.

Out on ye, owls! [6] nothing but songs of death? [*Strikes him.*
There, take thou that, till thou bring better news.

THIRD MESSENGER.

The news I have to tell your majesty
Is, that by sudden floods and fall of waters,[7]
Buckingham's army is dispersed and scatter'd;
And he himself wander'd away alone,
No man knows whither.

[1] **his head's assurance:** the security of his head. [2] **advertised:** advised; informed. [3] **Bishop of Exeter:** Peter Courtenay, a Lancastrian, had sought refuge in Brittany. [4] **moe:** more. [5] **competitors:** partners; conspirators. [6] **owls:** an allusion to the old belief that the hooting of an owl presaged death. [7] **sudden floods and fall of waters:** Richard's supporters had destroyed the bridges over the Severn, and the country between Gloucester and Bristol was impassable because of heavy rains and gale-force winds.

KING RICHARD.

I cry thee mercy:[1]
There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.
Hath any well-advised [2] friend proclaim'd
Reward to him that brings the traitor in?

THIRD MESSENGER.

Such proclamation hath been made, my lord.

Enter a fourth MESSENGER.

FOURTH MESSENGER.

Sir Thomas Lovel and Lord Marquess Dorset,
'Tis said, my liege, in Yorkshire are in arms.
But this good comfort bring I to your highness,—
The Breton navy is dispersed by tempest:
Richmond, in Dorsetshire, sent out a boat
Unto the shore, to ask those on the banks
If they were his assistants, yea or no;
Who answer'd him, they came from Buckingham
Upon his party:[3] he, mistrusting them,
Hoised [4] sail, and made his course again for Bretagne.[5]

KING RICHARD.

March on, march on, since we are up in arms;
If not to fight with foreign enemies,
Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.

Enter CATESBY.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken,—
That is the best news: that the Earl of Richmond
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford,
Is colder tidings, yet they must be told.

KING RICHARD.

Away towards Salisbury! while we reason here,
A royal battle might be won and lost:—

[1] **I cry thee mercy:** I beg your pardon.
[2] **well-advised:** thoughtful.
[3] **upon his party:** on his side.
[4] **Hoised:** hoisted.
[5] **Bretagne:** Brittany.

Some one take order Buckingham be brought
To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

LORD DERBY'S *house.*

Enter DERBY *and* SIR CHRISTOPHER URSWICK.

EARL OF DERBY.

Sir Christopher, tell Richmond this from me:—
That, in the sty of this most bloody boar,[1]
My son George Stanley is frankt up in hold.[2]
If I revolt, off goes young George's head;
The fear of that withholds my present aid.
But, tell me, where is princely Richmond now?

SIR CHRISTOPHER URSWICK.

At Pembroke, or at Ha'rford-west,[3] in Wales.

EARL OF DERBY.

What men of name[4] resort to him? [5]

SIR CHRISTOPHER URSWICK.

Sir Walter Herbert, a renowned soldier;
Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley;
Oxford, redoubted Pembroke,[6] Sir James Blunt,
And Rice ap[7] Thomas, with a valiant crew;[8]
And many moe of noble fame and worth:
And towards London they do bend their course,
If by the way they be not fought withal.

EARL OF DERBY.

Return unto thy lord; commend me to him:
Tell him the queen hath heartily consented
He shall espouse Elizabeth her daughter.
These letters will resolve[9] him of my mind.
Farewell. [*Exeunt.*

[1] **bloody boar:** i.e., Richard. [2] **frankt up in hold:** penned up in the (boar's) sty. [3] **Ha'rford-west:** Haverfordwest, Pembroke, Wales. [4] **of name:** of high rank. [5] **resort to him:** are assembled with him. [6] **redoubted Pembroke:** the much-feared (redoubtable) Jasper Tudor, Richmond's uncle. [7] **ap:** Welsh for "son of." [8] **crew:** military reinforcements. [9] **resolve:** inform.

RICHARD THE THIRD

ACT 5

ACT V

On All Souls' Day at Salisbury, Buckingham is led to his execution, repentant and remembering Margaret's curse.

At their respective camps, Richmond and Richard prepare for battle. Richmond's troops are confident and trustful of themselves, of one another, and of God. Richard's men are quiet and disconsolate, and Richard himself confesses his lack of spirit. On the eve of the battle, Richard and Richmond retire to sleep, and in their dreams are visited by the ghosts of all those whom Richard has slain. The ghosts, in turn, urge Richard to despair and die, and Richmond to live and flourish. Richard awakens from his dream distraught and frightened; Richmond, comforted and jocund.

On the day of battle, the sun does not shine. Richard is somewhat tardy in readying himself but delivers a stirring oration to his troops and rides into battle. Though his horse is killed, he fights as if possessed, seeking out Richmond. Finally, he meets Richmond and is slain.

Derby then gives the crown to Richmond, who, after ordering proper burial for the dead and pardons for Richard's defecting troops, prophesies, and prays for, a long and bounteous peace to begin with the reign of himself (King Henry VII) and his queen, Elizabeth.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Salisbury. An open place.

Enter the SHERIFF, *and* BUCKINGHAM, *with halberds, led to execution.*

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Will not King Richard let me speak with him?

SHERIFF.

No, my good lord; therefore be patient.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Hastings, and Edward's children, Rivers, Grey,
Holy King Henry, and thy fair son Edward,
Vaughan, and all that have miscarried [1]
By underhand corrupted foul injustice,—
If that your moody discontented [2] souls
Do through the clouds behold this present hour,
Even for revenge mock[3] my destruction!—
This is All-Souls' day,[4] fellows, is it not?

SHERIFF.

It is, my lord.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Why, then All-Souls' day is my body's doomsday.
This is the day that, in King Edward's time,
I wisht might fall on me, when I was found
False to his children or his wife's allies;
This is the day wherein I wisht to fall
By the false faith of him I trusted most;
This, this All-Souls' day to my fearful soul
Is the determined respite[5] of my wrongs:
That high All-Seer that I dallied with
Hath turn'd my feigned [6] prayer on my head,

[1] **miscarried:** died. [2] **discontented:** that is, unsatisfied because they have not been avenged. [3] **mock:** jeer at. [4] **All-Souls' day:** November 2. [5] **determined respite:** foreordained limit; time to which something is postponed. [6] **feigned:** pretended.

And given in earnest what I begg'd in jest.
Thus doth He force the swords of wicked men
To turn their own points on their masters' bosoms:
Thus Margaret's curse falls heavy on my neck,—
'When he,' quoth she, 'shall split thy heart with sorrow,
Remember Margaret was a prophetess.'—
Come, sirs, convey me to the block of shame;[1]
Wrong hath but wrong,[2] and blame the due of blame.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene II.

Plain near Tamworth.

Enter RICHMOND, OXFORD, BLUNT, *and others, with drum and colours.*

EARL OF RICHMOND.

Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,
Thus far into the bowels of the land [3]
Have we marcht on without impediment;
And here receive we from our father[4] Stanley
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.
The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,
That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,
Swills[5] your warm blood like wash,[6] and makes his trough
In your embowell'd bosoms,—this foul swine
Lies now even in the centre of this isle,
Near to the town of Leicester, as we learn:
From Tamworth thither is but one day's march.
In God's name, cheerly[7] on, courageous friends,
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace

[1] **block of shame:** the beheading block. [2] **Wrong hath but wrong:** my unjust death is only payment for the unjust deaths I have caused. [3] **bowels of the land:** heart of the country. [4] **father:** stepfather (Lord Stanley, the Earl of Derby). [5] **Swills:** guzzles. [6] **wash:** kitchen water mixed with scraps from the table, which is fed to hogs. [7] **cheerly:** heartily.

By this one bloody trial of sharp war.

EARL OF OXFORD.

Every man's conscience[1] is a thousand swords,[2]
To fight against this guilty homicide.

SIR WALTER HERBERT.

I doubt not but his friends will turn to us.

SIR JAMES BLUNT.

He hath no friends but what are friends for fear,
Which in his dearest[3] need will shrink from him.[4]

EARL OF RICHMOND.

All for our vantage.[5] Then, in God's name, march:
True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings;
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Bosworth field.

Enter KING RICHARD *in arms, with* NORFOLK, *the* EARL OF SURREY, *and others.*

KING RICHARD.

Here pitch our tents, even here in Bosworth field.
My Lord of Surrey, why look you so sad?

EARL OF SURREY.

My heart is ten times lighter than my looks.

KING RICHARD.

My Lord of Norfolk,—

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

Here, most gracious liege.

KING RICHARD.

Norfolk, we must have knocks;[6] ha! [7] must we not?

[1] **conscience:** certainty of being on the right side. **is a thousand swords:** is worth a thousand men armed with swords. [3] **dearest:** direst; most urgent. [4] **will shrink from him:** will desert him. [5] **vantage:** advantage. [6] **knocks:** hard knocks. [7] **ha:** eh.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

We must both give and take, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD.

Up with my tent! here will I lie to-night;

[SOLDIERS *begin to set up the* KING'S *tent.*

But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.[1]—
Who hath descried [2] the number of the traitors?

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

KING RICHARD.

Why, our battalia[3] trebles that account:
Besides, the king's name is a tower of strength,
Which they upon the adverse party want.[4]—
Up with the tent!—Come, noble gentlemen,
Let us survey the vantage[5] of the ground;—
Call for some men of sound direction:[6]—
Let's lack no discipline, make no delay;
For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day. [*Exeunt.*

Enter, on the other side of the field, RICHMOND, BRANDON, OXFORD, *and others. Some of the* SOLDIERS *pitch* RICHMOND'S *tent.*

EARL OF RICHMOND.

The weary sun hath made a golden set,
And, by the bright track of his fiery car,[7]
Gives token of a goodly day to-morrow.—
Sir William Brandon, you shall bear my standard.—
Give me some ink and paper in my tent:
I'll draw the form and model [8] of our battle,
Limit[9] each leader to his several [10] charge,
And part[11] in just proportion our small power.—
My Lord of Oxford,—you, Sir William Brandon,—

[1] **all's one for that:** that doesn't really matter. [2] **descried:** spied; seen. [3] **battalia:** battalion; army. [4] **want:** lack. [5] **vantage:** "condition favorable to success"—Schmidt. [6] **sound direction:** good leadership in tactical maneuvers; sound military skill. [7] **fiery car:** the chariot of the sun god. [8] **model:** plan. [9] **Limit:** appoint. [10] **several:** separate. [11] **part:** divide.

And you, Sir Walter Herbert,—stay with me.—
The Earl of Pembroke keeps[1] his regiment:—
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good-night to him,
And by the second hour in the morning
Desire the earl to see me in my tent:
Yet one thing more, good captain, do for me,—
Where is Lord Stanley quarter'd, do you know?

SIR JAMES BLUNT.

Unless I have mista'en his colours much,—
Which well I am assured I have not done,—
His regiment lies half a mile at least
South from the mighty power of the king.

EARL OF RICHMOND.

If without peril [2] it be possible,
Sweet Blunt, make some good means[3] to speak with him,
And give him from me this most needful [4] note.

SIR JAMES BLUNT.

Upon my life, my lord, I'll undertake it;
And so, God give you quiet rest to-night!

EARL OF RICHMOND.

Good night, good Captain Blunt. [*Exit* BLUNT.] Come, gentlemen,
Let us consult upon to-morrow's business:
In to my tent; the air is raw and cold.

[*They withdraw into the tent.*

Enter, to his tent, KING RICHARD, NORFOLK, RATCLIFF, CATESBY, *and others.*

KING RICHARD.

What is't o'clock?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

It's supper-time, my lord;
It's nine o'clock.

[1] **keeps:** stays with.
[2] **peril:** danger to yourself.
[3] **make some good means:** take steps.
[4] **needful:** urgent.

KING RICHARD.

I will not sup to-night.—
Give me some ink and paper.—
What, is my beaver[1] easier[2] than it was?
And all my armour laid into my tent?

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

It is, my liege; and all things are in readiness.

KING RICHARD.

Good Norfolk, hie thee to thy charge;
Use careful watch, choose trusty sentinels.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

I go, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Stir with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

I warrant you, my lord. [*Exit.*

KING RICHARD.

Catesby,—

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

My lord?

KING RICHARD.

Send out a pursuivant-at-arms
To Stanley's regiment; bid him bring his power
Before sunrising, lest his son George fall
Into the blind cave of eternal night.[3] [*Exit* CATESBY.
Fill me a bowl of wine.—Give me a watch.[4]—
Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.—
Look that my staves[5] be sound, and not too heavy.—
Ratcliff,—

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

My lord?

[1] **beaver:** the lower part of the face-guard of a helmet.
[2] **easier:** that is, lighter and easier to handle.
[3] **fall . . . night:** be murdered by me.
[4] **watch:** either a sentinel or a watch light (a slow-burning candle divided into time sections).
[5] **staves:** spears.

KING RICHARD.

Saw'st thou the melancholy Lord Northumberland?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Thomas the Earl of Surrey, and himself,
Much about cock-shut time,[1] from troop to troop
Went through the army, cheering up the soldiers.

KING RICHARD.

So, I am satisfied.—Give me a bowl of wine:
I have not that alacrity of spirit,
Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have.

[*Wine brought.*

Set it down.—Is ink and paper ready?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

It is, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Bid my guard watch; leave me.—Ratcliff,
About the mid of night come to my tent
And help to arm me.—Leave me, I say.

[*Exeunt* RATCLIFF *and others.*

Enter DERBY *to* RICHMOND *in his tent;* LORDS *and* GENTLEMEN.

EARL OF DERBY.

Fortune and victory sit on thy helm!

EARL OF RICHMOND.

All comfort that the dark night can afford
Be to thy person, noble father-in-law![2]
Tell me, how fares our loving mother?

EARL OF DERBY.

I, by attorney,[3] bless thee from thy mother,
Who prays continually for Richmond's good:
So much for that. The silent hours steal on,

[1] **cock-shut time:** evening twilight; the time when chickens go to roost.
[2] **father-in-law:** stepfather.
[3] **attorney:** proxy.

And flaky[1] darkness breaks within the east.
In brief,—for so the season bids us be,—
Prepare thy battle early in the morning,
And put thy fortune to th' arbitrement[2]
Of bloody strokes and mortal-staring[3] war.
I, as I may,—that which I would I cannot,—
With best advantage will deceive the time,[4]
And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms:
But on thy side I may not be too forward,
Lest, being seen, thy brother, tender George,
Be executed in his father's sight.
Farewell: the leisure[5] and the fearful time
Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
Which so-long-sunder'd friends should dwell upon:
God give us leisure[6] for these rites of love!
Once more, adieu: be valiant, and speed [7] well!

EARL OF RICHMOND.

Good lords, conduct him to his regiment:
I'll strive, with troubled thoughts, to take a nap,
Lest leaden slumber[8] peise[9] me down to-morrow,
When I should mount with wings of victory:
Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen.

[*Exeunt all but* RICHMOND.

O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye;
Put in their hands Thy bruising irons[10] of wrath,
That they may crush down with a heavy fall
Th' usurping helmets of our adversaries!
Make us Thy ministers of chastisement,

[1] **flaky:** streaked with light. [2] **arbitrement:** judgment. [3] **mortal-staring:** with death in its glance. [4] **will deceive the time:** that is, will pretend to be loyal to Richard, while trying to help you. [5] **the leisure:** lack of opportunity. [6] **leisure:** time. [7] **speed:** fare. [8] **leaden slumber:** the heavy sleep of exhaustion. [9] **peise:** weigh. [10] **irons:** swords.

That we may praise Thee in the victory!
To Thee I do commend my watchful soul,
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! [*Sleeps.*

Enter the GHOST *of* PRINCE EDWARD, *son to* KING HENRY THE SIXTH.

GHOST [*to* KING RICHARD].
Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
Think, how thou stabb'dst me in my prime of youth
At Tewksbury: despair, therefore, and die!
[*to* RICHMOND] Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls
Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf:
King Henry's issue,[1] Richmond, comforts thee.

Enter the GHOST *of* HENRY THE SIXTH.

GHOST [*to* KING RICHARD].
When I was mortal, my anointed body
By thee was punched full of deadly holes:
Think on the Tower and me: despair, and die,
Harry[2] the Sixth bids thee despair and die!
[*to* RICHMOND] Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror!
Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be king,
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep: live, and flourish!

Enter the GHOST *of* CLARENCE.

GHOST [*to* KING RICHARD].
Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
I, that was washt to death with fulsome[3] wine,[4]
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betray'd to death!
To-morrow in the battle think on me,

[1] **issue:** son.
[2] **Harry:** King Henry.
[3] **fulsome:** nauseating; suffocating.
[4] **wine:** the malmsey butt.

And fall [1] thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!
[*to* RICHMOND] Thou offspring of the house of Lancaster,
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee:
Good angels guard thy battle! live, and flourish!

Enter the GHOSTS *of* RIVERS, GREY, *and* VAUGHAN.

GHOST OF RIVERS [*to* KING RICHARD].
Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,
Rivers, that died at Pomfret! despair, and die!
GHOST OF GREY [*to* KING RICHARD].
Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair!
GHOST OF VAUGHAN [*to* KING RICHARD].
Think upon Vaughan, and, with guilty fear,
Let fall thy lance: despair, and die!
ALL THREE [*to* RICHMOND].
Awake, and think our wrongs in Richard's bosom
Will conquer him!—awake, and win the day!

Enter the GHOST *of* HASTINGS.

GHOST [*to* KING RICHARD.]
Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake,
And in a bloody battle end thy days!
Think on Lord Hastings: despair, and die.
[*to* RICHMOND] Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!
Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!

Enter the GHOSTS *of the two young* PRINCES.

GHOSTS [*to* KING RICHARD].
Dream on thy cousins smothered in the Tower:
Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,

[1] **fall:** let fall.

And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die!
[*to* RICHMOND] Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;
Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy![1]
Live, and beget a happy race of kings!
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

Enter the GHOST *of* ANNE, *his wife.*

GHOST [*to* KING RICHARD].
Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne thy wife,
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations:
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!
[*to* RICHMOND] Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet sleep;
Dream of success and happy victory!
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

Enter the GHOST *of* BUCKINGHAM.

GHOST [*to* KING RICHARD].
The first was I that helpt thee to the crown;
The last was I that felt thy tyranny:
O, in the batle think on Buckingham,
And die in terror of thy guiltiness!
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death:
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath!
[*to* RICHMOND] I died for hope[2] ere I could lend thee aid:
But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismay'd:
God and good angels fight on Richmond's side;
And Richard falls in height[3] of all his pride.

[1] **the boar's annoy:** Richard's wrath; annoyance.
[2] **for hope:** hoping to help you.
[3] **in height:** at the height.

[*The* GHOSTS *vanish.* KING RICHARD *starts out of his dream.*

KING RICHARD.

Give me another horse,[1]—bind up my wounds,—
Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft! I did but dream.
O coward conscience,[2] how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue.[3] It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:[4]
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No;—yes, I am:
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain: yet I lie, I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well:—fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several [5] tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several [6] tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all used [7] in each degree,[8]
Throng to the bar,[9] crying all 'Guilty! guilty!'
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die, no soul shall pity me:
Nay, wherefore should they,—since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?

Enter RATCLIFF.

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

My lord,—

[1] **another horse:** Richard has dreamed that his white courser, Surrey, has been shot from under him. [2] **coward conscience:** that is, a conscience that only dares attack when he is asleep. [3] **The lights burn blue:** a sign that ghosts are present. [4] **by:** near. [5] **several:** separate. [6] **several:** different. [7] **used:** committed. [8] **in each degree:** from the lowest to the highest degree. [9] **bar:** the wooden railing that separates the judge's seat from the prisoner.

KING RICHARD.

Who's there?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

My lord, 'tis I. The early village-cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn;
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.

KING RICHARD.

O, Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!—
What thinkest thou,—will our friends prove all true?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

No doubt, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear!—
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent; and every one did threat[1]
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.

KING RICHARD.

By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Armed in proof[2] and led by shallow[3] Richmond.
It is not yet near day. Come, go with me;
Under our tents I'll play the eaves-dropper,
To hear if any mean to shrink from me.[4]

[*Exeunt* KING RICHARD *and* RATCLIFF.

Enter the LORDS *to* RICHMOND, *sitting in his tent.*

LORDS.

Good morrow, Richmond!

[1] **threat:** threaten.
[2] **in proof:** in full armor.
[3] **shallow:** lacking maturity (mental depth).
[4] **to shrink from me:** to desert me.

EARL OF RICHMOND [*waking*].

Cry mercy,[1] lords and watchful gentlemen,
That you have ta'en a tardy sluggard here.

LORDS.

How have you slept, my lord?

EARL OF RICHMOND.

The sweetest sleep, and fairest-boding dreams
That ever enter'd in a drowsy head,
Have I since your departure had, my lords.
Methought their souls, whose bodies Richard murder'd,
Came to my tent, and cried on victory:
I promise you, my heart is very jocund
In the remembrance of so fair a dream.
How far into the morning is it, lords?

LORDS.

Upon the stroke of four.

EARL OF RICHMOND.

Why, then 'tis time to arm and give direction.

His oration to his SOLDIERS.

More than I have said, loving countrymen,
The leisure[2] and enforcement[3] of the time
Forbids to dwell upon: yet remember this,—
God and our good cause fight upon our side;
The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,
Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces;
Richard except,[4] those whom we fight against
Had rather have us win than him they follow:
For what is he they follow? truly, gentlemen,
A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
One rais'd in blood, and one in blood establisht;
One that made means[5] to come by what he hath,

[1] **Cry mercy:** I beg your pardon.
[2] **The leisure:** lack of leisure.
[3] **enforcement:** compulsion.
[4] **Richard except:** with the exception of Richard.
[5] **made means:** manufactured reasons.

And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him;
A base foul stone,[1] made precious by the foil
Of England's chair,[2] where he is falsely set;
One that hath ever been God's enemy:
Then, if you fight against God's enemy,
God will, in justice, ward [3] you as his soldiers;
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;
If you do fight against your country's foes,
Your country's fat[4] shall pay your pains the hire;[5]
If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,
Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;
If you do free your children from the sword,
Your children's children quit[6] it in your age.
Then, in the name of God and all these rights,
Advance[7] your standards, draw your willing swords.
For me, the ransom[8] of my bold attempt
Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;
But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
The least of you shall share his part thereof.
Sound drums and trumpets, boldly and cheerfully;
God and Saint George! Richmond and victory! [*Exeunt.*

Enter KING RICHARD, RATCLIFF, ATTENDANTS, *and* FORCES.

KING RICHARD.

What said Northumberland as touching[9] Richmond?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

That he was never trained up in arms.

[1] **base foul stone:** common, semiprecious stone. [2] **made precious . . . chair:** made to seem like a rare and precious jewel because of the background against which it is set (the royal throne). [3] **ward:** protect. [4] **Your country's fat:** the fat of the land. [5] **your pains the hire:** the wages for your labor. [6] **quit:** reward. [7] **Advance:** raise. [8] **ransom:** penalty; fine. [9] **as touching:** in regard to.

KING RICHARD.

He said the truth: and what said Surrey, then?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

He smiled, and said, 'The better for our purpose.'

KING RICHARD.

He was in the right; and so, indeed, it is. [*Clock strikes.*

Tell [1] the clock there.—Give me a calendar.—

Who saw the sun to-day?

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

Not I, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Then he disdains to shine; for, by the book,[2]

He should have braved the east an hour ago:

A black day will it be to somebody.—

Ratcliff,—

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

My lord?

KING RICHARD.

The sun will not be seen to-day;

The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.

I would these dewy tears were from the ground.

Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me

More than to Richmond? for the selfsame heaven

That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

Enter NORFOLK.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

Arm, arm, my lord; the foe vaunts[3] in the field.

KING RICHARD.

Come, bustle, bustle;—caparison[4] my horse;

Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power:[5]

I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain,

[1] **Tell:** count the hours of.

[2] **book:** calendar.

[3] **vaunts:** exults.

[4] **caparison:** cover with a richly decorated cloth.

[5] **power:** forces.

And thus my battle shall be ordered:—
My foreward [1] shall be drawn out all in length,
Consisting equally of horse and foot;[2]
Our archers shall be placed in the midst:
John Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Earl of Surrey,
Shall have the leading of this foot and horse.
They thus directed, we will follow
In the main battle; whose puissance[3] on either side
Shall be well winged with our chiefest horse.
This, and Saint George to boot! [4]—What think'st thou, Norfolk?

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

A good direction, warlike sovereign.
This found I on my tent this morning.

[*He sheweth him a paper.*

KING RICHARD [*reads*].

'Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold,
For Dickon[5] thy master is bought and sold.'
A thing devised by the enemy.—
Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge:
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls;
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;[6]
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.—

His oration to his ARMY.

What shall I say more than I have inferr'd? [7]
Remember whom you are to cope withal;[8]—
A sort[9] of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,
A scum of Bretons,[10] and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyed [11] country vomits forth

[1] **foreward:** vanguard; front line. [2] **horse and foot:** cavalry and foot soldiers. [3] **puissance:** strength. [4] **to boot:** in addition; for good measure. [5] **Dickon:** a familiar term for the nickname Dick (for Richard). [6] **pell-mell:** with an all-out charge. [7] **inferr'd:** alleged; mentioned. [8] **cope withal:** struggle with; encounter. [9] **sort:** company (in a bad sense). [10] **Bretons:** followers of Richmond from Brittany. [11] **o'er-cloyed:** overpopulated.

To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;
You having lands, and blest with beauteous wives,
They would distrain[1] the one, distain[2] the other.
And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,
Long kept in Bretagne[3] at our mother's[4] cost?
A milk-sop, one that never in his life
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again;
Lash hence these overweening rags[5] of France,
These famisht beggars, weary of their lives;
Who, but for dreaming on this fond[6] exploit,
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves:
If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons; whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd,[7] and thumpt,
And, on record,[8] left them the heirs of shame.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters? [*Drum afar off.*] *Hark!* I hear their drum.
Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood;[9]
Amaze the welkin[10] with your broken staves!

Enter a MESSENGER.

What says Lord Stanley? will be bring his power?

MESSENGER.

My lord, he doth deny to come.

KING RICHARD.

Off with his son George's head!

[1] **distrain:** confiscate; seize. [2] **distain:** dishonor; stain. [3] **Bretagne:** Brittany. [4] **mother's:** a mistake for brother's; Richard's brother-in-law, the duke of Burgundy, supported the exiled Richmond. [5] **rags:** a contemptuous term. [6] **fond:** foolish. [7] **bobb'd:** pommeled; beat with their fists. [8] **on record:** in the history books. [9] **ride in blood:** charge with all the passion of battle. [10] **Amaze the welkin:** alarm the heavens.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

My lord, the enemy is past the marsh:
After the battle let George Stanley die.

KING RICHARD.

A thousand hearts are great within my bosom:
Advance our standards, set upon our foes;
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen[1] of fiery dragons!
Upon them! Victory sits on our helms. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Another part of the field.

Alarum:[2] *excursions.*[3] *Enter* NORFOLK *and* FORCES; *to him* CATESBY.

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Rescue, my Lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue!
The king enacts more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger:[4]
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for Richmond in the throat[5] of death.
Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost!

Alarums. Enter KING RICHARD.

KING RICHARD.

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.

Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.

KING RICHARD.

Slave, I have set my life[6] upon a cast,[7]
And I will stand the hazard[8] of the die:[9]
I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
Five have I slain to-day instead of him.
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse! [*Exeunt.*

[1] **spleen:** violent wrath (the spleen was supposed to be the seat of anger). [2] *Alarum:* trumpet call to arms. [3] *excursions:* the sounds of clashing of arms. [4] **Daring an opposite . . . danger:** challenging or confronting every danger of the opponent: [5] **throat:** maw. [6] **set my life:** wagered my all. [7] **cast:** throw of the dice. [8] **hazard:** chance. [9] **die:** singular of *dice.*

Scene V.

Another part of the field.

Alarum. Enter RICHARD *and* RICHMOND; *they fight.* RICHARD *is slain. Retreat and flourish.*[1] *Re-enter* RICHMOND, DERBY *bearing the crown, with divers other* LORDS.

EARL OF RICHMOND.

God and your arms be praised, victorious friends!
The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead.

EARL OF DERBY.

Courageous Richmond, well hast thou acquit thee.[2]
Lo, here, this long-usurped royalty[3]
From the dead temples of this bloody wretch
Have I pluckt off, to grace thy brows withal:
Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.[4]

EARL OF RICHMOND.

Great God of heaven, say Amen to all!—
But, tell me, is young George Stanley living?

EARL OF DERBY.

He is, my lord, and safe in Leicester town;
Whither, if't please you, we may now withdraw us.

EARL OF RICHMOND.

What men of name[5] are slain on either side?

EARL OF DERBY.

John Duke of Norfolk, Walter Lord Ferrers,
Sir Robert Brakenbury, and Sir William Brandon.

EARL OF RICHMOND.

Inter their bodies as becomes their births:

[1] **Retreat and Flourish:** call for retreat, and flourish of trumpets.
[2] **Acquit thee:** acquitted yourself.
[3] **long-usurped royalty:** i.e., the crown.
[4] **make much of it:** cherish it; do good with it.
[5] **name:** high rank.

Proclaim a pardon to the soldiers fled
That in submission will return to us:
And then, as we have ta'en the sacrament,[1]
We will unite the white rose and the red.[2]
Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,[3]
That long have frown'd upon their enmity!—
What traitor hears me, and says not Amen?
England hath long been mad and scarr'd herself;
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,
The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,
The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire:
All this divided York and Lancaster,
Divided in their dire division,
O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,
The true succeeders of each royal house,
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together!
And let their heirs—God, if Thy will be so—
Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace,
With smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days!
Abate[4] the edge[5] of traitors, gracious Lord,
That would reduce[6] these bloody days again,
And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
Let them not live to taste this land's increase
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!
Now civil wounds are stopt, peace lives agen:[7]
That she may long live here, God say Amen! [*Exeunt.*

[1] **we have ta'en the sacrament:** we have taken a solemn vow. [2] **unite the white rose and the red:** unite the House of Lancaster and the House of York (accomplished with the marriage of Richmond (Henry VII) and Elizabeth, Edward IV's daughter). [3] **conjunction:** marriage; union. [4] **Abate:** blunt; turn aside. [5] **edge:** sword. [6] **reduce:** bring back. [7] **agen:** again.

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